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New Statesman

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# THERE'LL ALWAYS BE AN ULSTER

**RALPH NADER:** The 75-year cover up
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New Statesman

*Cover drawing:* John Minnion

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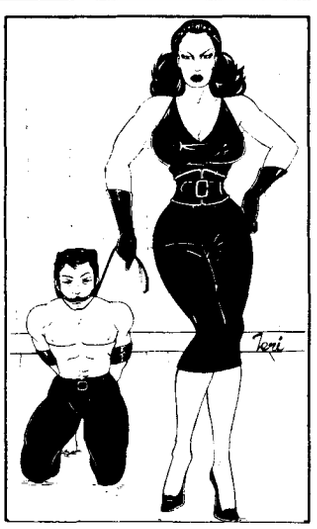
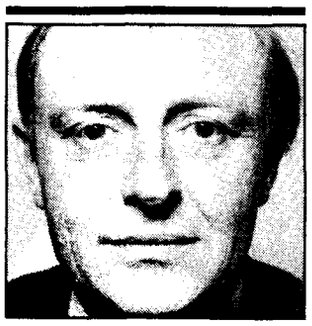
### STILL CLOUDED BY DECEIT

ROBERT MILLIKEN looks at the fallout from last year's Australian Royal Commission report on British nuclear bomb tests in Aboriginal homelands

### SEX FOR HIRE

What do men pay for when they put 50p in the peepshow slot — and what's the connection between class and sado-masochism? STEVE ROBERTS looks at the punters in sex for hire, while NICKY ROBERTS, who chose prostitution over factory work, criticises socialists and feminists for their double standards on exploited women



### BLACK SECTIONS

Why is race different from sex? TONY SEWELL puts the question to Neil Kinnock in an interview on Black sections

### BOYS' BRIGADE

ALISON HENNEGAN explores the concept of Christian manliness as depicted in the 19th-century school story

New Statesman

Vol 111 No 2859 10 January 1986

# Tarzan down among the choppers

WHATEVER the eventual outcome of *The Westland Affair*, the Whitehall farce that has played to packed lobby correspondents since before Christmas, there is one group that will be laughing most of the way to the bank. They are the Westland shareholders.

A month ago they were the owners of a company that should have been in receivership. It had huge accumulated losses and next to no forward orders. Now, instead of following other famous old names of British industrial history into oblivion, it has been the object of cut throat competition for the privilege of paying to rescue it.

If the farce only concerned an industrial survival strategy for a bankrupt company, the right bet would be to back the judgement of Westland's new chairman. Sir John Cuckney has, after all, an impressive track record — and Michael Heseltine has none — of clearing up financial and industrial messes created over the years by incompetent British managements and presided over by inadequate British boards of directors. He organised the rescue of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board in 1970. He sorted out the Crown Agents, when they collapsed in the welter of scandal and imprudent finance that made up the secondary banking crisis in the mid-1970s and then moved on to save the Port of London. He also knows about that grey area where government and private industry interacts, having between whiles served as a temporary civil servant at the head of the government's Property Services Agency and as chairman of the Ministry of Defence's arms sales company, International Military Services Ltd.

Cuckney's immediate analysis of Westland's situation was that it was a tiny company trying hopelessly to compete alone with the giants in the international helicopter market; that there is far too much current capacity in the market, so rationalisation is inevitable; that the United States accounts for a huge part of that market; that Sikorsky is a market leader and well run; and that consequently the best hope for Westland in its weak negotiating position would be some Sikorsky deal.

It amounted (and amounts) to a perfectly rational plan for getting out of a deep hole and it is not surprising that Westland has been unimpressed by a last minute spatchcocked counter-proposal for a rescue based on collaboration with European helicopter manufacturers, who are short of orders and two of whom have already spent huge sums of money on research and development that they would be only too keen to share with Westland and the British taxpayer.

If the Westland board's performance has at least the merit of being logical, the same cannot be said the Defence Secretary's increasingly erratic performance. He has not in the past shown the slightest interest in Westland's problems, which in one view have arisen precisely because Michael Heseltine's Ministry of Defence has proved unable to make a decision about how many of what kind of helicopter it wants between now and the 1990s and then stick to it. His interest in European joint ventures is also very recent and seems to date from his humiliating experiences late last year in Washington and London, when instructed by Mrs Thatcher to ensure that the UK was the first to sign a Star Wars agreement with the Reagan Administration. He signed, but Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger obviously and contemptuously rejected any



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element of implied partnership, or even a guaranteed volume of research work, in the SDI project.

THERE ARE CERTAINLY major industrial issues bound up in the Westland affair. But they are not the ones that either Michael Heseltine, nor Leon Brittan, have deployed while diverting the groundlings with their antics. Against the Brittan case, it is absurd that the issue of whether the United Kingdom should continue to have a helicopter industry and the issue of whether there should be government supported co-operation in helicopter production on a European basis should be decided without public or political debate under the memoranda and articles of association of the moribund Westland company at an extraordinary meeting of its shareholders, who know nothing of these issues and for most of whom the overriding concern will understandably be their short-term financial benefit. But the Thatcher-Brittan camp cannot entertain that criticism, because it applies to the whole gamut of their supposedly 'non-interventionist' industrial policy.

It is equally absurd to pretend that companies that sell the overwhelming part of their output to the Ministry of Defence operate in a world of 'market forces' and 'competition'. The 'market' is decided by politicians and service chiefs. The business, if you can get it, is of the comfortable 'cost plus' kind. Since it is a government decision whether there is a market and how much the taxpayer will be required to fork out to finance it, it is quite simply cant to declare that the right course is to 'leave it to the shareholders alone'.

Against the Heseltine case, it is equally absurd to pray in aid considerations of 'national security' as an argument for putting Westland in as a junior partner in a European consortium as against putting it in as a junior partner in an American-Italian consortium. The attempt to use the fact that Libya has a shareholding in Fiat as an argument against the Sikorsky-Fiat option, while it made good weekend copy, was wholly without substance. The Libyan shareholding has been public for years and that has not prevented previous co-operation with Fiat in other areas.

'National security' as a justification for policy in the mouths of ministers in this government has become a substitute for argument. There is nothing so unique about the helicopter that its continued production in the United Kingdom puts 'national security' — whatever that term may mean — at risk. (Incidentally, even under the Heseltine plan complete helicopter production would no longer be preserved in the United Kingdom, for critical R & D facilities and component manufacture would be located in West Germany and Italy, countries which would presumably soon be overrun as the Warsaw Pact hordes swept west.)

Even to conduct the argument in terms that Tories would have to accept, the present government's defence policy gives heavy emphasis to the so called British, so called independent, so called nuclear deterrent. Yet it is entirely dependent on the Americans providing us with missiles. If a Conservative government can accept a defence policy based on American missiles, why can it not accept one based on American helicopters?

THERE ARE STRONG arguments for resisting the Sikorsky rescue of Westland; but again they are not arguments that Michael Heseltine can put forward while remaining a member of a Thatcherite Conservative government. Indeed the weakness of his position in these past weeks has come exactly from this fact. Because he has not been able to deploy sustainable arguments for the position he so belatedly adopted, his motive has appeared to be almost entirely personal political ambition and a desire to be the first 'wet' to raise the standard of open revolt against Thatcherite industrial indifference.

They are, though, arguments that apply to Westland and to helicopters not because they are connected with defence. They are arguments that go to raise the fundamental questions about industrial *ownership*: and they are arguments that call into question the whole of this government's industrial policy.

Michael Heseltine cannot bring himself to face the fact that, if there really are overriding issues of national interest involved in the operations of a commercial business, then that fact ought to be reflected in the ownership or control of that business. His current attempt to exercise that influence and control by way of indirect and unscrupulous pressure on people like unit trust fund managers and small shareholders is improper and probably ineffective.

Equally, if Europe is belatedly waking up to the fact that it, like most of the rest of the world, is victim to an increasingly insidious form of American neo-colonialism, transmitted by the mechanisms of US-based multinational corporations, then that realisation needs to be expressed, as for example in countries like Canada, in laws or conventions that the ownership, or at least control, of important European industrial and commercial assets should be European. It is indeed the case that, if this is not done, by the end of the century Europe will be a satellite manufacturing culture.

But this is not an argument that applies to the defence supply industry in particular. It applies to *any* activity that is judged to be of national or European importance. We would argue that it applies more, for example, to ownership of BP or British Telecom — or for that matter of the media. Yet Michael Heseltine's government has been happy to see *The Times*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Sun*, the *News of the World*, the *Telegraph* and the *Sunday Telegraph* run by citizens of North America.

Mirror Group newspapers are at least controlled in Europe by Robert Maxwell through Liechtenstein. Even then, it is probably as important in the national interest to know (which we do not because Maxwell has chosen to hide behind Liechtenstein secrecy) who is the ultimate beneficial owner of this important national institution than the question of whether a small company in the West Country is or is not controlled by Sikorsky. □


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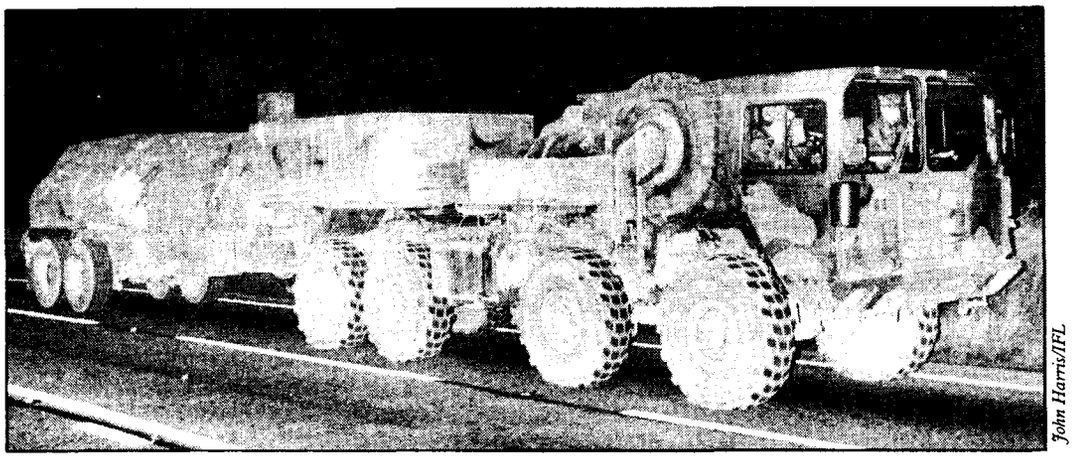

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# AMERICANS TRY TO DISOWN THEIR CRUISE CONVOYS

**SEEMINGLY embarrassed at the inept timing of the most recent Cruise manoeuvres — at the time of the Geneva summit — the US Defense Department has been trying to pretend it was nothing to do with them. POLLY WOOLLEY reports on this blatant untruth**

WHEN THE CRUISE convoy was brought out in the early hours of 9 November and exercised throughout the Geneva summit at Blackball Firs on Salisbury Plain, even pro-Cruise people thought it a little undiplomatic. In addition to the usual protests organised by Cruisewatch (with more than 200 people taking part in a mass tresspass) CND and several Labour MPs handed in a letter of protest at the US embassy. Arguments that it was part of a regular training pattern looked a little disingenuous when it was pointed out that Cruise missile launchers had not left Greenham Common since July.

## Odd responses

Feelings ran equally high in America where Cruise action groups in 40 states regularly demonstrate and protest when the Cruise convoy leaves Greenham. American protestors phoning their Senators and Representatives received a strange response. Mel Goertz, a veteran American peace campaigner, was told by an aide to the Republican Representative Jeffords, 'I have just gotten confirmation from the Department of Defense in Washington . . . They are RAF manoeuvres. The RAF is in command of the joint forces as part of regular exercises.' The aide went on to suggest that 'the Nato allies are left out of Geneva. Britain may be posturing'. Later, speaking to another campaigner, the aide said the exercise: 'Our country has nothing to do with it.'

## Refuge in semantics

This version is flatly contradicted by the Ministry of Defence in London. They state that Cruise missile exercises from USAF Greenham are organised jointly by USAF forces and British army (in the affected military areas) and police (who are responsible for security in transit). They seemed slightly perplexed — albeit flattered — that the RAF were seen to be in control by the American Defense Department but suggested that it was a 'semantic slip'. But the wording of the remarks seems unambiguous enough; and why, if the Americans 'had nothing to do with it', did Cruisewatchers entering Blackball Firs Copse on the night of 20 November encounter armed American soldiers? ●

# Liverpool Militants continue to look after their own

**IN THE WEEK of a difficult by-election in the city, and in the run up to the councillors' court appeal against their disqualification by the district auditor, Liverpool's Militants have again demonstrated their uncanny ability to make enemies.**

The long-running sub-plot of the Sampson Bond affair has now been written into the main financial plot with a grant of £7,000 to a group alleged to be a Militant front. Last September, faced with the refusal of the majority of the black community organisations to recognise Hatton nominee Bond as Race Relations Adviser (because of his apparent complete lack of expertise in the area), Militant supporters from outside Liverpool helped set up the Merseyside Action Group (MAG).

## Physical Militancy

The move coincided with an influx into Granby ward of Militant full-timers from all over the country, which is perhaps why the contact phone number MAG gave initially was inside the council's notorious Militant-dominated Central Support Unit. MAG members were shortly afterwards implicated in a physical assault on Christian Duala, Nalgo member and black caucus supporter.

The grant request appeared, without notice, on a supplementary agenda at a meeting of the city's finance and strategy committee on Friday 3 January. In a skimpy paragraph, unsupported by any documentation, it omitted to provide details of its aims, constitution, accounts or membership. But £7,000 for a secretarial/development worker was granted from the hard up city budget. Prominent Labour members, including the leader and the deputy chair, are reported to have abstained, and opposition is expected from others, including ward councillors for Granby, where most Liverpool blacks live.

## Not all so lucky

Many other long-standing groups, representing Somalis, Chinese, and the Community Relations Council itself, have applied unsuccessfully for aid, but have paid the price for independence. The committee recommendation goes to full council this Friday 10 January, when the by-election result will be known — along with, perhaps, the political price for yet another 'jobs for the boys' scandal.

**Ian Williams**

# Another race row for Islington

*ISLINGTON COUNCIL has once again found itself at odds with its major union, Nalgo, over its equal opportunities policy.*

*As in the case of Vi Howell* (NS *23 August 85), the union is protesting that the council acted too late in investigating accusations of racial harassment. This latest case, however, is complicated by counter-accusations of sexual harassment.*

*Nalgo is backing the appeal on 13 January of a black temporary worker who has been sacked for sexually harassing a typist. The union has taken up his case because he filed a complaint of racial harassment against the relief manager of the department where the typist worked* a week before *any complaint was made against him.*

*Only after the black worker was sacked was his grievance heard — and upheld. However, the manager was given only a week's suspension without pay. The black worker denies the allegations of sexual harassment and claims they were only made in reply to his own complaint. Nalgo was put in a sticky situation, given the accusations against the black worker. 'We deliberated for a long time over the evidence because we also take sexual harassment very seriously. however, we couldn't find evidence of it in this case', said a Nalgo representative.*

*The council has left itself wide open to criticism after its gaffe in hearing the grievances in the reverse order in which they were made and in dealing out such widely differing punishments. What emerges from the debacle is that the council's equal opportunities policy needs to be more consistently implemented. The black worker claims, for instance, that he would have filed a complaint long before but though he wrote to Richard Croson, head of Race Relations and Margaret Hodge, leader of the council, for advice, no-one informed him of the existence of a grievance procedure.*

*As in the case of Vi Howell, the picture of racial harassment in the office is one of petty insults and irritations which, day after day, make a worker's life unbearable (but which the gutter press can make a mockery of) compounded by more outright statements of racism.* ●



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# THE MOST 'REALISTIC' BOROUGH IN BRITAIN

**THE CITY of Westminster is increasingly favoured by profit-hungry property developers — they like the Tory council's helpful attitude towards them. Now one of the borough's historic buildings has been sold off for demolition and development. LINDA HARDMAN reports**

BY MARCH this year, the builders will have started work on the destruction of the oldest, and first, public library in London — the one at Great Smith Street in Victoria. Opened in 1893, it's one of the few Victorian buildings left in the area. In its place it seems that they will put another office block and another car park.

There's no sign that Victoria residents want this to happen. More than a thousand of them have already signed a petition condemning it.

The company which intends to 'develop' the area is Land Securities Ltd, who are so fond of developing Victoria that they now own enough space there to cover St James's Park. One set of offices they own is the Sanctuary Buildings, right next to the Great Smith site, which is, of course why they want it.

The only authority with which they have had to deal is Westminster city council, which sold them the site. It also seems set to grant planning permission: the council has already drawn up plans for a new modern library a few streets away, and Land Securities' scheme looks like going through on the nod.

The company bought the site for £4.5m. The only other bidder, the government of Pakistan, offered £5.5m, but withdrew the bid when it heard informally that its plans to build an embassy would not be approved. The council's planning department estimated the value of the site at £4.25m, so in theory Land Securities pitched their offer pretty smartly and Pakistan was outrageously generous. In practice there was only ever one bidder.

And Land Securities had a trump card. They were going to build a car park for 'only' £11,500 per space, which is less than Westminster normally spends on car parks. All that was needed was agreement that people actually wanted a car park at all. So, five weeks before the Land Securities offer was approved, a resolution was passed by a planning subcommittee that there was a 'prima facie' need for a car park, and the public should be asked if they thought the site suitable.

But that didn't leave much time for consultation. So the council will end up giving back to Land Securities more than half the money paid, and will receive in exchange 200 car parking spaces which no one wants. All this despite the fact that the council already *has* an unused £6m earmarked for car parks, and apparently has no intention of spending it.

From the developers' point of view, things look much better. They will get a large building site adjacent to their existing buildings. They will also get possession of four flats on the site. Perhaps that's why *Investors Chronicle* recommends putting your money into offices in Victoria, where the planners are so 'realistic'. And perhaps that's why Land Securities, which is Britain's biggest property developer, chooses Westminster, from among the country's 369 district councils, in which to invest a third of its assets. ●

**One of London's most used libraries — but 'peaceful as a church' says one fan**

# Telecom's race relations under the microscope

**BRITISH TELECOM'S race relations and equal opportunities policy — never its strongest point (see for example 'Dial V for Victimisation' *NS* 31 May 1983) — has come under official public scrutiny, and emerged badly. It occurred during an industrial tribunal last month, the written record of which has just been made available. BT won the case, but at the cost of frequent criticism by the tribunal.**

The case against BT was brought by Mr Jia Nat, an Indian solicitor who works for the GLC. In February last year he replied to a BT advertisement for solicitors to work in its legal department. He wasn't invited for interview, and later discovered that two of his junior (white) colleagues had been offered jobs by BT.

He wrote and asked why. BT replied that his paper qualifications were worse than those candidates interviewed. Mr Nat doubted this and took legal action. In one respect he was entirely vindicated: the tribunal found that 'Mr Nat has excellent academic and professional qualifications and considerable post-qualification experience' and called BT's letter to him 'manifestly untrue'. In fact, it transpired that by almost every index, Mr Nat was a better qualified candidate than many of those interviewed. The tribunal found 'no pattern of consistency' in the behaviour of the BT solicitor who had made the selection: the man himself agreed that 'he had applied no consistent criteria and found it difficult to explain in retrospect why he had chosen one candidate and excluded another'. He also admitted that he had quite wrongly supposed that Mr Nat's Indian qualifications were worth less than British ones. The tribunal was 'extremely concerned' about this and called it 'on the face of it discriminatory' though not an important factor.

The personnel manager of BT's legal section claimed that the company operated an equal opportunities policy, but was quite unable to say what that policy was. The tribunal caustically drew the company's attention to passages in the 1976 Race Relations Act code of conduct which refer to the need to educate staff who select interviewees and said that it was 'by no means uncritical of BT's selection procedures'.

Mr Nat lost the case because BT was allowed to plead, in effect, incompetence rather than malice. The tribunal used the rather curious argument that BT's solicitor was 'on the point of retiring after serving in the department for 28 years and we do not accept that a man of his personal and professional integrity would participate in a racially discriminatory process which he knew was illegal and wrong.'

Mr Nat is applying for leave to appeal. Whatever the eventual outcome, the case demonstrates the immense difficult that complainants still face when they take proceedings under the 1976 Race Relations Act — legislation ten years old this year.

**Jolyon Jenkins**

# College fridge contained illicit smallpox virus

**AT ONE LEVEL it was pure science fiction: deadly laboratory disease threatens London. At another it showed flagrant ignorance of safety procedures at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.**

On 3 December the School was holding a Christmas party. In a laboratory at the other end of the building, four laboratory technicians were clearing out an old fridge when they came across a tin box. Inside, and unknown to anyone, were six vials of the smallpox, deposited in 1952. There was no record of their existence. The scientist who had worked on the specimens had long since died. The disease has been eradicated too. There was no reason for the vials to be there. In theory only a couple of laboratories in the world have been allowed to preserve the disease, neither of them in Britain precisely because the threat of smallpox now comes primarily from complacent laboratories.

The Health and Safety at Work Act imposes a duty on employers to provide a safe working environment. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has confirmed that this includes keeping an accurate inventory of dangerous pathogens.

None of the four technicians who found the vials has contracted the disease. The Dean of the School, Dr Gordon Smith, told the *New Statesman*: 'It is very difficult to explain why there was a tin box at the back of the fridge which no one had ever investigated'. He added that the School was 'technically at breach because we were slow in reporting it'.

The Dean identified the following 'regrettable' lapses:

- Neither he, nor the DHSS, nor the HSE was told until six days after the discovery and the local environmental health officer not even then.
- None of the four laboratory technicians was put under surveillance for six days. Had any of them been unlucky enough to develop smallpox in that time — it would have been very unusual — scores of unvaccinated people could have contracted the disease.
- Neither the Dean nor the School's professor of community medicine, Patrick Hamilton, knew how reliably to warn local environmental health officers of the potential hazard. Professor Hamilton, indeed, contacted Scotland Yard for an environmental health officer's telephone number.

The DHSS regards the episode as a 'one off' incident. A spokesperson said there were no plans to remind laboratories of the safety procedures. The HSE is waiting for a report on the incident to be finished before deciding whether to prosecute.

**Peter Parker**



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*AFTER 12 months of waiting, 66-year-old Dr. Maire O'Shea (left) stands trial at Manchester Crown Court next week. She is one of five people accused of conspiring to cause an explosion. A consultant psychiatrist, Dr. O'Shea is president of the Irish in Britain Representation Group.*

*The trial stems from a wave of detentions under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, although none of the defendants have been charged under that Act. Dr. O'Shea was arrested at her Birmingham home on 5 January 1985, having returned from a holiday in Ireland knowing that the Special Branch had raided her house.*

*Since then she has spent her time travelling the country speaking at meetings. Thousands of people have signed a petition calling for the charge to be dropped, and Dr. O'Shea's campaign is supported by 50 MPs and Euro-MPs.* **Tony Harcup**

# Parents fight paediatric negligence

**WHEN GRIEVING PARENTS are persistent and angry enough at what they believe to be medical negligence which causes the death of a child, they won't fade away, much as the medical authorities might wish they would.**

This is certainly true of Joan and Derek Bye of Swansea who lost their 12-year-old daughter, Helenor, in 1978, from what they claim were the fatal side-effects of the drug Epilim. Nearly eight years later, this couple's campaign against paediatric negligence goes on unabated.

Helenor, a lively, pretty child, active in her Sunday school activities and popular with schoolmates, was prescribed Epilim, the brand name in the UK for Sodium Valproate, a drug for epilepsy which has been on prescription in the UK Since 1964.

This was for what a Cardiff neurologist had diagnosed as temporal lobe epilepsy after Helenor had suffered a bout of violent and sustained nausea and lack of coordinated movement. Following continuous daily ingestion of the drug, Helenor worsened dramatically, losing weight, becoming incontinent, nauseated, and eight months after taking it, she died. This was on 27 April 1978, a month before her 13th birthday.

As we reported 31 May 1985, the medical profession at the inquest on Helenor's death held that a rare hereditary condition caused fatal hyperammonaemia — too much ammonia in the blood. The inquest accepted this and not Epilim as the cause of death — but the Byes didn't, and still don't.

Says Joan Bye of her bereavement, as acute as if it were yesterday's: 'We won't give up. We want an open enquiry. And we've found that there are many parents like us who suspect paediatric negligence in cases where their children have worsened or died after a faulty diagnosis and drug prescription.'

## 'Forgotten children'

Letters to the Byes from parents in like tragic circumstances have prompted the couple to start a self-help organisation called 'The Forgotten Children' with the sub-heading of 'PROPS' meaning *Parents' Recognition of Paediatric Errors*.

'We're not looking for financial compensation but for the right to be heard when we suspect negligent treatment. A doctor administers a drug and a child dies and we're just supposed to accept it. These are the forgotten children,' says Mrs Bye.

The Byes and other parent members of PROPS believe lessons can be learned from these paediatric tragedies. They are campaigning for post-mortems to be conducted away from the hospitals where a misdiagnosis of a child is suspected and preferably with a single national register involved. They would like to see the autopsies performed by professors of paediatric pathology.

Reported deaths from Epilim, which can cause fatal liver damage, are very small and the relief it gives many is undeniable. The side-effects — nausea, gastric irritation, impaired liver function, fluid retention — are listed comprehensively in the 1985 drug guides for the profession (e.g. MIMS, the Monthly Index of Specialities, and the National Formulary issued by the BMA and the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain).

Perhaps it's significant that the 1985 edition of the Formulary cautions doctors to withdraw treatment immediately if any of the symptoms arise: nothing was said about withdrawing treatment in the 1984 edition. **Ruth Inglis**

*For Further Information about PROPS, write to: Mrs. Joan Bye, 51 The Orchard, Newton Mumbles, Swansea SA3 4UQ.*

# MISCELLANY

## Long-term investment

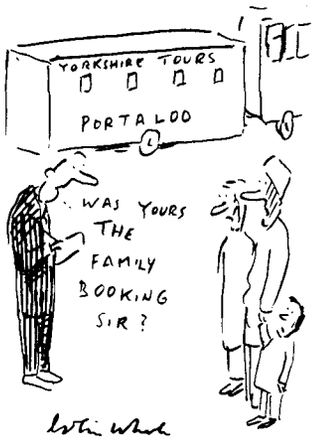
How much do you think David Owen's signature is worth? Go on, guess. The answer, according to the SDP, is £1.50. That's the difference between the price of an ordinary bumper issue of *The Social Democrat* (coming out in March to celebrate five years of the party's existence) and a special one autographed by the Leader. Whether you think Owen's autograph is worth that much depends, presumably, on whether you think he's going to be prime minister. It might be worth taking a gamble on it, if only it wasn't necessary to fork out £3.50 for a copy of *The Social Democrat* at the same time.

## Illiberal party

*Stephen Ross, the Liberal MP for the Isle of Wight, is not standing at the next general election, and the fight is on to become Liberal candidate in his place. One front-runner is local county councillor, Vivienne Rayner. Nothing very remarkable about that — except that she would be the first woman to defend a Lberal majority since, wait for it, 1951. Yes, Lady Megan Lloyd George (Anglesey) was the last woman Liberal MP. And what happened to her? She subsequently joined the people's party and later won Carmarthen. From the Liberals. Will Miss Rayner's political career have a similar trajectory?*

## Socialism in action

*Anyone thinking of booking a holiday with Yorkshire Tours — the 'progressive' package tour company who advertise with the* NS *— should bear in mind the following story. Ms Shahin Rallf, who's resident in Britain but has a Kenyan passport, booked a holiday to Italy with them*




*for 21 December. At the last moment the tour was diverted through Belgium rather than France because of a ferry strike. She didn't have a visa for Belgium, and was turned back at Zeebrugge. What Ms Rallf objects to is that Yorkshire Tours didn't give her any support, but just sat in the coach, saying 'It isn't your fault your were born', and leaving her to argue with the officials. When she later phoned them to complain, the man who runs the company told her that it was normal practice to lock 'Indians' in the lavatory when going through Belgium. He has now confirmed to the* NS *that he wasn't joking: he really* does *do this 'as it's sometimes the only way for them to get their holiday'. He also says that it never does any good to argue with border officials as he has never known them to change their minds. You may draw your own conclusions.*

## Desperate measures

It can't be easy being the Tory candidate opposing David Owen, but that's no excuse for taking it out on the *New Statesman*. Mr Tom Jones, prospective Conservative candidate for Plymouth Devonport, claims that he is responsible for local newsagers withdrawing from sale copies of our Bumper Christmas issue. He's cross at our publication of extracts from a CIA manual that explains, among other things, how to make Molotov cocktails. He told the *Western Morning News* that he had been a regular reader of the *NS* since he was a teenager 'so that I can keep in touch with the activities of the loony left', that he found us 'rarely seditious or dangerous', but that our article, was 'dangerous, possible criminal'. This is, of course, highly defamatory, as well as causing us financial loss, and we reserve the right to take whatever action we deem appropriate. (Labour councillor Reg Scott was far more enlightened. He told the *WMN* that he already knew how to make a Molotov cocktail, having been instructed by the Churchill government of 1940). In the meantime, Plymouth readers may like to know that copies of the issue in question are still available from our back numbers department, price £1.90.

## Old Lady turns miserly

We all appreciate that times are hard at the Bank of England, what with Johnson Matthey owing them hundreds of millions of pounds and Mrs T having an ingrained aversion to giving credit. But Mr Charman, Payroll Accounts Manager, has, we feel, been showing excessive zeal in his recent attempts to gain the sum of £1.07 from a source close to Miscellany. This represents nothing more sinister than an overpayment made by Mr Charman when the said source left the employment of the Bank for the *NS*. The moral onus, surely, is on Mr Charman to admit the mistake and call it quits — the two letters so far sent in an attempt to get the money back must have cost at least £20 in labour costs. (We can assume he doesn't type his own correspondence.) Mr Sedgemore has been alerted.



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# SCRUTINY

# MORE AND MORE GAPS IN CABINET PAPERS

**Last week Cabinet and other papers from 1955 were opened to public scrutiny under the 30-year rule. More significant than what was in the papers is how many were held back. An unusually large proportion of the 1955 Cabinet papers have been 'weeded out'. PATRICK FORBES went to the Public Record Office at Kew**

OF A TOTAL of 311 Cabinet memoranda written in 1955, 23 have been held back, or 1 in 14. This compares unfavourably with the previous year, where a prolific Cabinet undistracted by a general election wrote 402 memos, only 11 of which remain unreleased, or 1 in 37. The average 'non-release rate' for the previous five years is one memo in 50.

The trend toward increased secrecy is even more marked when it comes to declassifying the activities of Cabinet committees. The Attlee government accumulated 311 ad hoc committees in 1950-1. We know about all but 58 of these, or 20 per cent of the total. In his short period in office in 1955 Eden amassed 17 committees. The activities of seven of them remain classified, or 40 per cent of the total.

The Lord Chancellor's Department, which approves the weeding, says there has 'certainly not' been a change of policy this year.

There are three official grounds for holding back papers — national security, personal matters and information given in confidence — which are not likely to explain the rising trend, unless 'national security' were being defined more broadly, in keeping with the Thatcher ethos.

Possible explanations for greater reticence, other than 1980s paranoia, could be Suez or Maclean and Burgess. The Suez crisis, however, developed over the course of *1956* and, as this week's *Observer* showed, there seems no reluctance to declassify documents from 1955 on dealings with the Middle East in general, and President Nasser in particular.

If the Foreign Office's correspondence with its Moscow embassy can be taken as a litmus test for official sensitivity over Maclean and Burgess, then 1955 shows it less concerned than at any time since the pair's flight in April 1951, with fewer documents than before being held back under the 50-year rule, or Section 3 (4) of the Official Secrets Act.

But some things never change, and the British establishment's reluctance to publish details about plans for nuclear power remains entrenched. The description for documents held in PRO category AB12 reads:

> Atomic Energy Research Establishment: Committee papers — Minutes and papers of various committees, working parties and panels — The files are indexed. Some are closed for 50 years. [Others are held back in perpetuity under Section 3 (4).]

It comes as no surprise to find that 'some' is an understatement, with 10 per cent of documents from this category in 1955 held back, as in previous years. ●

# Mystery K

**What did BRIAN SHAW get his New Year knighthood for? His only 'services to industry' have been to be associated with financial disaster.**

Under his leadership shipping company Furness Withy's losses have risen from £2 million in 1982 to £4.5 million in 1984. Furness Withy was taken over in 1982 by Hong Kong shipping magnate C. Y. Tung, through Orient Overseas (Holdings) Ltd on whose board Shaw sits. Orient Overseas' shares were suspended on the Hong Kong exchange in September last year, when it was revealed that the Tung group as a whole had debts of $2 billion.

Shaw is also a director of Grindlays, the UK-based international bank taken over in 1984 by Australasian bank ANZ. After reviewing the first few months of the merger, and the £50 million of losses accumulated by Grindlays, the *Financial Times* commented: 'ANZ should be accorded charitable status in the UK.'

What's more, Shaw was vice-president of the General Council of British Shipping last year, in which the British fleet declined to another record low.

So what was his honour for? Downing St offers 'no comment'. And Shaw's company doesn't *even* donate money to the Tories. ●

# 'Aunt Annie's Bomb Factory'

**Six years after the *New Statesman* alleged a miscarriage of justice, two Conservative MPs are to press the Home Secretary to reopen the Guildford pub bombing case.**

It's too late to do anything for the seven convicted of explosives offences, one of whom, Guiseppe Conlon, died in prison in 1980, while the others have now been released after up to 10½ years in prison. But Sir John Biggs-Davidson MP says it's important to 'restore honour to the family's name'.

Annie Maguire, five of her family and a friend who had dropped by were convicted in 1976 of making bombs. The only evidence was a positive test for nitroglycerine on samples allegedly taken from their fingernails and gloves. The test, which destroyed the evidence, is no longer used and the forensic scientist who invented it gave evidence at the trial that its use had been 'unscientific and incompetent'.

Biggs-Davidson, a Roman Catholic, has campaigned especially on behalf of Conlon for as long as we have, but John Wheeler is a more recent convert to the cause. A former prison governor, Wheeler is the Maguires' MP.

However, the 'Aunt Annie's bomb factory' case (*NS* 21 March 1980 and 9 March 1984) is only the tip of the iceberg. After the October-November 1974 IRA mainland bombing campaign in which 40 people died, the police were under great pressure to secure convictions. Two groups of people were convicted in connection with the Guildford pub bombing — the seven connected with the Maguires on charges of making bombs, and four others, still in prison on life sentences, accused of planting them. Another six Irishmen still in prison were convicted of planting the Birmingham pub bomb, which killed 21 civilians. All 17 are almost certainly innocent, as Chris Mullin has shown (*NS* 1 January 1982 and 1 November 1985).

Another group of four people were arrested after the 'Balcombe Street siege' in 1975; they proclaimed their membership of an IRA Active Service Unit and claimed responsibility for the Guildford bombing.

**John Rentoul**

**Annie Maguire: released last February after 10½ years in prison — for a crime she didn't commit? Seventeen others remain inside**



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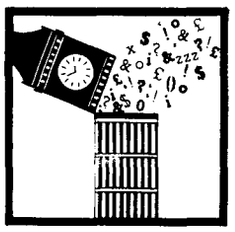

# Tarzan auditions for the blockbuster — and fails

FEW SIGHTS are more delectable than members of the ruling classes knocking hell out of themselves in public. It should be made into a movie, with characters like Michael 'Do you wanna know a secret' Heseltine, Leon 'You dirty rat' Brittan, Margaret 'Michael, *don't* do that' Thatcher and Sir John 'I want to be alone' Cuckney. Perhaps we could persuade Sir Richard Attenborough to make *Chorus Line 2* — the saga of an unrelenting and finally unsuccessful struggle to persuade the stars to sing together in harmony.

Yet while much innocent (and some not-so-innocent) pleasure is to be gained from watching the battle for Westland unfold, serious issues are involved. Most of those issues concern the way the final decision is reached rather than the decision itself.

According to Thatcher and Brittan, it is wholly a matter for the board and shareholders of Westland to decide. This is a perfectly reasonable view for free market Tories to hold. Shareholders take the financial risks; it is only proper that they should reap whatever rewards are going; and if their company finds itself in trouble, they have every right to sell to the highest bidder. That is the way capitalism works: interfere with shareholders' rights and you distort the capital markets. Hence the determination of Thatcher and Brittan to leave it to Westland.

Let us, however, imagine that the battle had taken place in different circumstances.

**Variant one.** The bid came not from Sikorsky but from (let us call it) Moskorsky, an East European enterprise. Moskorsky offered oodles more money than anyone else and guaranteed masses more work for Westland's employees. Asked about the dangers of transferring British defence technology to the Warsaw Pact, Moskorsky's chairman replied that he was willing to sign a solemn and binding pledge that no such transfer would take place. 'Your secrets will be as safe with you as they have always been', he told reporters.

**Variant two.** The bid *was* from Sikorsky, but instead of all that mealy-mouthed stuff about keeping jobs and technology in Britain, Sikorsky's owners, United Technologies, said: 'Do you guys take us for fools or something? We don't intend making anything in Yeovil for a moment longer than we have to. Of course we want to transfer your technology to the US and we want access to European markets. You accuse us of wanting to dominate the world market? We regard that as a compliment. We're happy to buy off Westland's shareholders, but after that we'll do whatever we want. If Britain doesn't have a helicopter industry afterwards, that's your problem, not ours.'

**Variant three.** Westland's financial crisis did not occur until 1990. By then the British government had taken its privatisation programme a lot further and had, among other things, sold off the Ministry of Defence. When Westland hit its rocky patch, British Defence Industries plc used its small change to buy the company. Few people noticed Mrs Thatcher's brief comment that 'this is another example of how our free market principles are being applied in practice'.

THE POINT OF these fantasies (although variant two may not be so far wide of the mark) is to illustrate how feeble the argument is that the decision should be left to the

**PETER KELLNER**

market and Westland's shareholders. Clearly the government would intervene if Westland looked likely to fall into the hands of a potential enemy (variant one) or if the bidders made explicit their unconcern at Britain losing reliable access to a vital defence technology (variant two). And there is something odd about a dominant customer in the public sector being told to keep out, whereas nobody would raise an eyebrow if the same customer were in private ownership and stepped in smartly (variant three).

In practice, then, there are limits to the extent to which even the Prime Minister would apply free market principles. And she cannot evade this point by saying that the shareholders themselves would decide against the sale in the case of variants one and two: if there were the remotest chance of any company's shareholders acting against the government's clear conception of the national interest, the government — *any* government, including Mrs Thatcher's — would intervene.

It follows that Thatcher and Brittan feel either that no significant issue of national interest is at stake over the battle for Westland, or that the fate of Britain's only helicopter manufacturer does raise questions of the national interest but, as it happens, Sikorsky does not threaten those interests. Yet neither the Prime Minister nor the Trade Secretary has been required to state which of these is their view, nor what principles should determine behaviour when conflicts occur between free market forces and the national interest.

Heseltine appears to have taken a clearer and more robust view: where the two conflict, national interests should determine the outcome. He would have no trouble with the three variants above, because he is not too bothered about shareholders' rights where defence procurement is concerned.

Yet on closer examination, Heseltine's position is no more consistent than his opponents. When Westland first foresaw trouble last summer and approached him for help, Heseltine told them to get lost: it was not the Defence Ministry's job to bail out incompetent companies that made products that could not sell.

Two interpretations are possible of Heseltine's stand at that time. The first is that he did not think through the consequences of what he told Westland; the second is that he did, but subsequently changed his mind. Whichever explanation is the true one, it reflects little credit on the Defence Secretary.

Nor has Heseltine provided at any time a coherent view of what national interests are involved in the Westland battle or how, in principle, such interests should be reconciled with those of the shareholders. Heseltine has the support of all sorts of people who believe that Britain's conventional defence capabilities should involve co-operation with Western Europe rather than the United States; but, even if he has stumbled on the right decision, there are few signs that it is for the right reasons.

Of all the comments over the past months, probably the most pertinent came in the form of three questions in a letter to *The Times* last week:

> 1. Do we want to preserve a helicopter technology in Britain?
> 2. Since a purely national solution appears to be beyond our means, which of the rival proposals — American or European — will better enable Westland to meet our operational requirements now and in the future?
> 3. Where does the balance of advantage lie in encouraging European defence procurement and gaining access to American technology?

Those questions were posed by Julian Amery, one of the most right-wing of all Conservative back-benchers. He was surely right to ask them. It would be comforting to think that Heseltine and Thatcher could answer them, and even more comforting to think that the two people would give the same answers. Instead, all we can expect are contradictory evasions.

This week, Heseltine has been denying that his actions have been designed to win him the Tory leadership when Mrs Thatcher goes — which is just as well as he has displayed little of the finesse, loyalty or tactical skill that a successful party leader needs. If I were an MP looking for someone with those qualities to succeed Thatcher, the conclusion to draw from the Westland saga would be clear: draft Sir John Cuckney. □



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# A SLOGAN IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR A STRATEGY

**Unionist reaction to last year's Anglo-Irish agreement was violently hostile. But, says FIONNUALA O CONNOR, there is little sign that Protestant politicians or the paramilitaries behind them have thought through any policy of effective opposition to it**

*Belfast*

'ULSTER SAYS NO' is fine as a slogan to march to. But the truth is that Northern Ireland's Unionist politicians have little more idea now of where their campaign against the Anglo-Irish agreement is taking them than when that catchy war cry first hit the streets.

'Ulster Says . . .' the biggest voice bellows and back comes the glad cry: 'NO'. No room there for anyone to miss the beat. As a statement of the entire policy of a political movement, however, 'Ulster Says NO' has certain limitations

In a fortnight Northern Ireland is due to have 15 by-elections. They will probably be the oddest in local history, if not the most bitter and polarised — there's a lot of competition for that title. Unionists are currently trying to find loyal foot soldiers who will agree to stand against those Official Unionist and Democratic Unionist Party MPs who resigned their seats in protest against the Anglo-Irish agreement, but who as yet have no other opponents. Because if such faithful 'dummies' cannot be found, the by-elections cannot of course be held according to plan.

No opponent, no poll. Outgoing Unionist MP simply declared re-elected and collapse of what has to date been the major plank of Unionist opposition to the Republic of Ireland's newly legitimised role in Northern Ireland as guardian angel of the minority Catholic population.

The much vaunted Unionist 'referendum on Dublin rule' — designed to cover Mrs Thatcher with the shame of a huge angry Protestant NO to the Agreement — has come to look like the *only* plank in the 'strategy' of opposition once so proudly advertised. Withdrawal of Unionists from local government, as part of a 'total withdrawal of consent to be governed', is already a fact in many places, but there are few illusions about the effectiveness of that particular weapon. Northern Ireland's borough councils are virtually powerless.

For years Unionists have been demanding the return of the powers removed when direct Westminster rule was imposed, particularly in the much abused area of housing. They now talk a bit wishfully about the impact it will have when the 17 Unionist dominated councils — out of 26 — refuse to strike a rate. But there are vivid memories of the British appointment of a commission to the run the gerrymandered city of Derry.

No doubt about it, the agreement signed by Mrs Thatcher and the Taoiseach, Dr FitzGerald at Hillsborough two months ago is not easy to attack effectively, as indeed it was designed to be.

A recognition of an 'Irish role', a commitment to progressive amelioration of Catholic grievances, with a balancing promise to Protestants of increased Irish co-operation in crushing the IRA, plus the lure to Unionists that, if they agree to share power, they can have a devolved government which will take back much ground from the inter-governmental conference — how do you run an effective day-to-day popular campaign against that lot? Without, that is, suggesting that your real motive is simple pain at the loss of supremacy?

The strongest suit for the joint Official Unionist-DUP opposition has been to dwell on the agreement's fundamental unfairness. It gives Catholics a voice in Northern Ireland's affairs, while disenfranchising Protestants, they maintain, since Dublin represents Nationalism while London can no longer be said to speak up for Unionism.

## 'That has not stopped some Unionist politicians hinting at violence in the wings'

It is an argument that appeals in particular to the moderates, who insist they cannot be expected to accept an agreement presented to them as an established fact, without any prior consultation. The counter-argument that consultation would have been idle, because the planned agreement would have been rejected out of hand, is dismissed. Mrs Thatcher owes Ulster an election, Unionists declare — and keep on declaring.

Much has been made of the slogans that the Thatcher government used against Arthur Scargill during the miners' strike — the charges that he was scared of the ballot. 'It is a very strong moral argument, surely,' one leading if sceptical Unionist still maintains, even in private. 'But the trouble is, what do we do afterwards?' Or as another conceded glumly: 'All the elections can do for us is buy time.'

The ritual of resignation, the public promises to stand again on a 'smash-Hillsborough' ticket, the gearing up for an election campaign — all seem to have been a substitute for forward planning or for reflection on the difficulties in day to day tactics against the inter-governmental agreement. Unionists, for example, have attacked the first tentative signs of intent to restrain the Ulster Defence Regiment, the overwhelmingly Protestant militia that many Catholics would have liked to see disbanded, and the modest announcement that the mainly Protestant Royal Ulster Constabulary is getting a new code of conduct requiring all its members to respect both traditions equally and treat all citizens alike.

But a coherent Unionist response was impossible. The UDR proposals arrived as a programme of improved training — welcomed not only by the UDR chief but also by the Official Unionist security spokesman, an ex-UDR major. The RUC proposals were presented by the police themselves as part of the ongoing development of a truly professional force, acceptable to all.

Since another Unionist quarrel with the agreement has been that it will not stop the IRA — demonstrably true, IRA violence having surged in response to what that organisation sees as a threat — and since the Unionists have throughout the past 16 years insisted on their fervent support for the security forces against Republican terrorism, as opposed to the disloyal nationalists 'sniping' at them, it has not been impressive to witness security forces and Unionists differing so radically in their estimates of what the agreement means.

THE EXTERNAL enemy is bad enough. Internally things are not much easier. For all the talk of Unionist unity in the face of the latest threat to Protestant Ulster, divisions and tensions still run deep between the two parties, longtime rivals for the Unionist vote, and again, perhaps even more significantly, between the politicians and the Loyalist paramilitaries.

In 1974 the paramilitaries provided the muscle to back hardline politicians and to bring down the power-sharing executive set up by the last Anglo-Irish agreement at Sunningdale. Politicians, the Reverend Ian Paisley chief among them, and the representatives of illegal organisations, met daily to coordinate the 'Ulster Workers' Strike'.

It is occasionally forgotten now, but 'respectable' middle-class Protestants took the first week of the strike to become enthused. When the power-stations began to run down, however, and it became obvious that Harold Wilson's government had allowed an initially faltering movement to gain momentum, even the sight of lower-class 'thugs' and 'hooligans' carrying cudgels on the street, turning workers back from their factories and stopping cars, did



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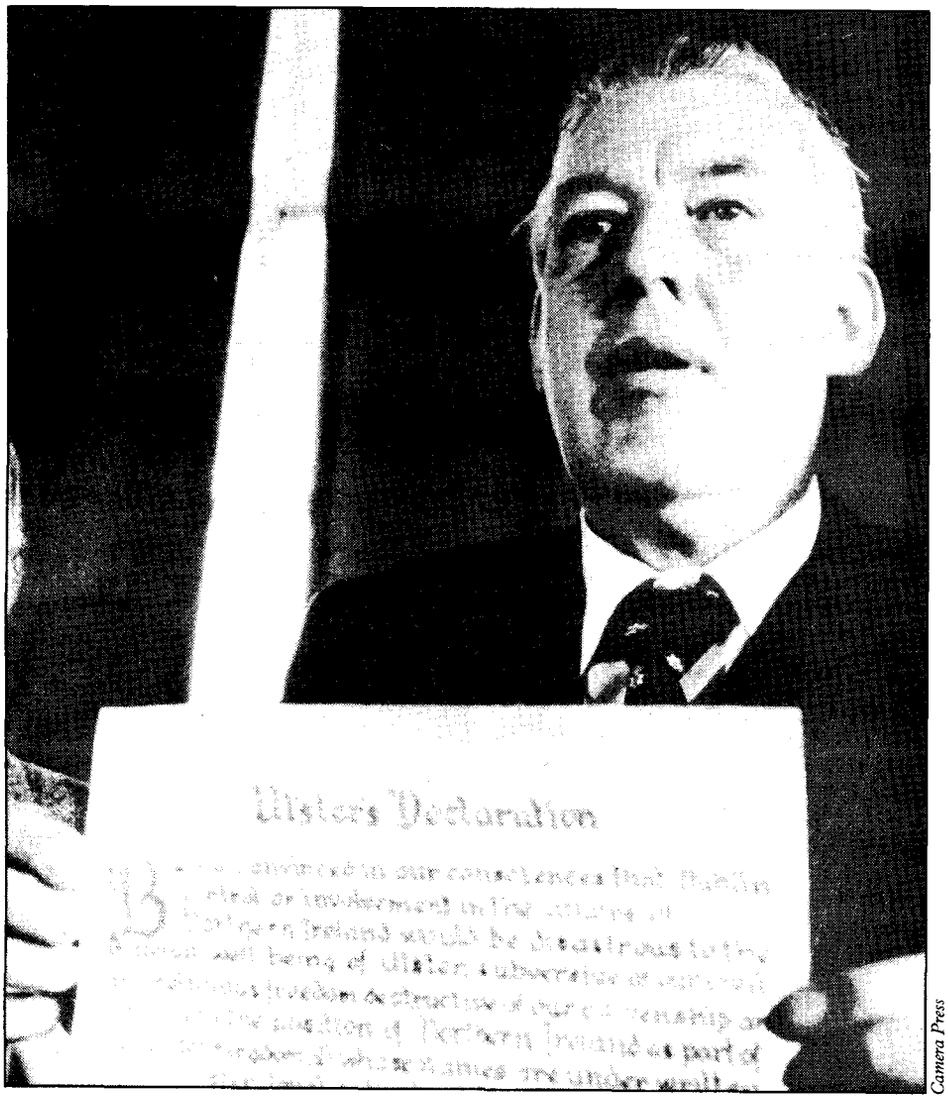


Camera Press

**No sign yet that Rev Ian Paisley will replay his 1974 role**

not deter upper-middle class enthusiasm and support for the strike.

The public alliance of hoods and politicians could not last. Ever since there has been much surly muttering about exploitation, particularly in the UDA, largest of the many groups and still legal, despite being responsible for killing several hundred Catholics. In the run-up to Hillsborough they let it be known that at least in the short-term the politicians must exhaust the democratic process and, implicitly, themselves, before they could expect a paramilitary response to the agreement.

That has not stopped some Unionist politicians hinting, whenever otherwise lost for dramatic words, at the paramilitary violence waiting in the wings. Most observers do not think a second 'Loyalist Workers' Strike' is likely, however, whatever the chances of a bomb in Dublin. There is also a strong suspicion that the Loyalist paramilitaries are as bereft of a master plan as the politicians.

Neither element can be much comforted either by the absence of any noticeable sense of mutiny against the agreement in the RUC, or in the civil service, staffed though it still is, thirteen years into direct rule, predominantly by Protestants at senior levels and tasked though it is to the new permanent inter-governmental secretariat based at Maryfield, outside Belfast.

The inadequacies and inconsistencies of the Unionist campaign were never more apparent than at the 'second battle of Maryfield' last weekend. The crowd of less than 3,000 who marched in heavy rain to the civil service building (strategically located next to the Army's Palace Barracks) happily chanted 'Ulster Says No' as they marched.

Presumably some at least would then have liked to hear a strong and stirring statement of where the campaign is headed next. What they got instead was a physical attack led by uniformed Loyalist paramilitaries on the Royal Ulster Constabulary, who were doggedly defending the Maryfield gates; old tired speeches from Official Unionists, increasingly uncomfortable with the dominance of the more aggressive DUP in the makeshift and noisy campaign to date; and a characteristically shameless display of riding the tiger from the Reverend Ian Paisley's young deputy, Peter Robinson, in the absence of his master.

Robinson asked the police to move back, appealed to the crowd not to be provoked and then led them in a medley of all the campaign slogans, voice rising ever higher. It began with 'Maggie, Maggie, Maggie, Out, Out, Out', and it ended, as always, with 'Ulster Says . . . NO.' □

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*Report of an ILO mission*

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Rex Features

# KNOWLEDGE HELPS CITIZENS, SECRECY HELPS BUREAUCRATS

**RALPH NADER (above) compares two decades of official disclosure in the United States with our infamous Official Secrets Act and argues that we must follow this American example**

IF THIS YEAR marks the 75th anniversary of Britain's Official Secrets Act, which is little reason for celebrating, it is also the 20th anniversary of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in the United States — and that is something to cheer.

For many years, US agencies were allowed to withhold government documents from the public, if officials decided that secrecy was 'in the public interest'. That vague standard, administered as in the United Kingdom today by the bureaucracy to prevent embarrassing disclosures, cast a cloak of secrecy over many government operations.

In 1966, Congress decided to change the presumption of secrecy and to limit the agencies' discretion to withhold records. Specifically, Congress voted to make all records of federal agencies (Congress and the Judiciary are exempt) available to any person upon request, unless the documents fell within a specific exemption from disclosure (e.g. classified records, trade secrets, sensitive law enforcement records, matters invading personal privacy). This right is not only available to US citizens, but to persons of any nationality.

Congress's hope that this law would usher in a new era of 'government in the open' went unrequited, however, as agencies became more creative in their efforts to evade disclosure of their records. In 1974, in the wake of the Watergate scandal and public dissatisfactions with government cover-ups, Congress amended the FOIA to deal with this problem, Specifically, it restricted the types of reference that can be automatically witheld from disclosure and it streamlined procedures which agencies must follow in processing requests for information.

These amendments were largely successful and recalcitrance by agencies in this area has generally been eroded. Despite some occasional foot dragging, agencies now recognise that the Freedom of Information Act is a fact of life and that the public is entitled to know what the Federal Government is up to. (If the government denies a FOIA request, citizens have recourse to the courts. If the denial is not justifiable, government must pay the challenger's legal fees. This encourages citizens to make use of the FOIA and diminishes the government's incentive to drag out litigation against individuals who lack resources.)

Journalists and citizens' groups routinely use the FOIA to uncover examples of government waste and abuse, as well as unsafe products which are on the market. To take but a few examples:

- A consumer group used the Act to uncover the evidence of serious defects in certain steel-belted radial tyres. These disclosures helped prompt the US Department of Transportation to recall 10 million tyres.

- Some investigative journalists discovered that not all the billions being spent on national defence are for that purpose. Instead, they learned that the US Navy was using federal funds to make admirals more comfortable on their destroyers to the tune of spending $14,000 on a sofa and $41,000 to carpet a wardroom, at a cost of $93 per square yard.



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Thses disclosures and others prompted a Senate sub-committee to investigate the matter, after which the navy spelled out critieria for furnishings and announced a settlement with the contractor regarding overcharges, which may save US taxpayers as much as $170 million all told.

● A separate investigation by Common Cause, a citizens' group, found that the Pentagon was rubber stamping requests by military contractors to pay for the costs they incurred providing military officials and Congressional personnel with parties, shooting trips, rides on corporate jets and yachts and free football tickets.

As the manufacturers saw it, these were simply 'costs of doing business' that had to be included in the price of missiles, tanks and other weapons they were selling to the Pentagon. They also sought to have the Defense Department pay for their costs in lobbying Congress for the orders for the weapons systems they would be granted. Following publication of a story outlining these practices, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger asked Pentagon officials to clamp down on this practice, a move which can save taxpayers millions of dollars in future years.

● The Better Government Association, another citizens' group, used the FOIA to reveal that a major meat packing company in Colorado had violated numerous rules designed to protect beef from contamination. What made this company especially significant was that it was supplying 24 per cent of the ground beef purchased for use in the Federal programme that provides subsidised lunches to school children. After the story appeared, the Secretary of Agriculture impounded the 6.5 million pounds of ground beef in Federal warehouses and suspended the company from bidding for new school lunch contracts.

● Another investigation disclosed that Thomas Reed, one of President Reagan's top security advisors, had been engaging in questionable securities trading practices. Information obtained from the Securities and Exchange Commission, which regulates stock exchanges, showed that Reed had fabricated data and signed other people's names to forms required by his brokerage house to carry out 'insider trading'. Shortly after reports about his activities became public he resigned.

● In 1983, the Public Citizen Health Research Group, a consumer group, used the FOIA to uncover evidence that Oraflex, a purported wonder drug for treating arthritis, had been rushed onto the US market, even though the manufacturer knew that dozens of Oraflex patients had died in Britain where the drug was first licensed. Following these and other disclosures, the manufacturer withdrew the drug from the market.

These examples are just the tip of the iceberg, in the sense that disclosures prompted almost immediate reform. While not every revelation leads to change, the FOIA is used extensively by journalists and has been the basis of literally hundreds of news stories over the past decade. The value of these disclosures in terms of improved public awareness of how government is functioning is incalcuable.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST beneficiaries of the FOIA, though, is neither the press nor the average citizen, but the corporate community. Businesses routinely make use of the FOIA to find out what the government is planning and to keep track of information that has been submitted to agencies by their competitors. At last count, more than 60 per cent of all FOIA requests are made by corporations, an indication of how widespread the benefits of the Act have been.

The success of the FOIA inevitably raises the question of whether the Act can be exported to other countries. The answer is 'yes'. Recently, Canada adopted its own version of the Freedom of Information Act that covers Cabinet departments. While journalists and historians in Canada have complained that too much information is still 'off limits', the Canadian law is still a first step in the right direction — and provides powerful support for adoption of a similar law in the United Kingdom.

One of the principle arguments made against adopting an FOIA in Canada was that it would not work, because the United States has a clear division between Congress and the Executive Branch of government, whereas the distinctions are not as clear in a Parliamentary system. The Canadian experience should help to dispel that myth. While it is true that Canadian law is overly deferential to the bureaucracy, it does suggest that such a system could be successfully employed in Britain.

Such a reform ought to commend itself to the present British government — though there seems little prospect of that. Although many of the FOIA's initial supporters in Congress were political liberals, the Act can be viewed ideologically as a 'Tory reform'. Political conservatives in both Britain and the United States claim that they are mistrustful of centralised national government and support efforts to limit its scope and power.

What they fail to realise, however, is that *knowledge* is power and that secrecy is one of the principle tools which an unresponsive bureacracy can use to perpetuate its existence and its way of doing business, regardless of what reforms are being demanded by the public and elected officials.

A Freedom of Information Act helps to expose more clearly what government is going on a day-to-day basis, thus promoting public understanding of what programmes are and are not working, what abuses are taking place, and what changes are needed.

One of the strengths of a democracy is that it trusts its citizens to make intelligent choices about how they should live and be governed. But knowledge is necessary in order to make such intelligent choices and openness in government helps to achieve that end. Information is the currency of democracy.

For most of this century, Britain has lived with an Official Secrets Act, which gives the national government the power to punish the disclosure of information which it regards as damaging. But the presumption needs to be reversed. Instead of an Official Secrets Act, is it not now the time for an Official Disclosure Act? □

*Ralph Nader is a Consumer Advocate in the United States.*

**Ralph Nader** will be one of the main speakers at a rally on Tuesday 14 January to 'celebrate' the 75th anniversary of the passing of the 1911 Official Secrets Act.

The Secret Rally will be held at Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1. Other speakers will include **Roy Hattersley MP, David Steel MP,** plus **Jonathan Aitken MP, Clive Ponting, Sarah Tisdall** and our own **Duncan Campbell** (all four of whom have been prosecuted under Section 2 of the OSA).

Stalls, music, entertainment. Doors open 6.30 pm, rally begins 7.30 pm. Tickets £3 — available on the door, or in advance from OSA Birthday Rally, CFI, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1.

# This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed. (On postcards please).

□ Scunthorpe police are looking for someone who filled the town council's telephone answering machine over the weekend with a recording of Handel's *Messiah*, which lasts almost three hours. — *Public Service & Local Government Journal* (Chris Marlow)

□ If a new public pay telephone gives you trouble in the cold spell, 'stick the handset up your armpit,' says British Telecom. — *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

□ The new Transport Act is so hard to understand that Government has announced that a series of briefings will be held round the country to explain it. But those who attend will be charged £17.25 — £15 plus £2.25 VAT. — *Daily Telegraph* (Mr W. Pugh)

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TRAMPLING WOMEN

# LOVE ME, LOVE MY TAX

**HILARY LAND on tax 'reforms' which will reinforce inequality in marriage**

YOU MIGHT THINK, from the glib and forthright way in which the word 'family' drops from the mouths of leading politicians, that basing tax and social security systems around the family unit would be simple. It would, of course, be no such thing. Leaving aside the problem of how many people (including leading politicians) manage to live inside 'proper' family units, the whole idea conflicts with other principles.

At its heart, the ideal family means the man has a job, and his wife stays at home to keep house and discipline the children. Ranged up against this view are employers' needs for women workers, family needs for two incomes, the woman's desire for work and income of her own, and State principles of treating all citizens equally regardless of sex. It is this last which runs through a memorandum produced by the EEC last year on Income Taxation and the Equal Treatment of Men and Women. A House of Lords committee considered it over the summer and, a week before Norman Fowler published his White Paper, they delivered their report.

The timing highlights the absurdity of treating tax and benefit systems separately. Nowhere is that more clear than in the White Paper's proposal for a family credit scheme (a benefit to be paid out in the head of household's wage packet). This scheme is both the clearest marker of a shift of resources from women to men but is also justified as a move towards co-ordinating tax and benefit!

Yet the Lords committee report on tax has a different view of family finance. They conclude that equal treatment is best achieved by a fully independent system of taxation for people in marriage, with any loss of income caused by one partner giving up work made up by cash benefits. It is a proposal which might please those who think that the State should not stand in the way of an individual desiring to get a job; that incentives to work should be equal to all. But *The Times* has already published a leading article denouncing its proposals for being at odds with the government's current thinking on the family and public spending.

The Chancellor, Nigel Lawson, publicly favours the quite different system of transferable tax allowances, a scheme which the Lords committee considered and rejected. Currently taxation is based on marriage, unlike social security which disregards the marital status of people living in couples.

A married man can claim the married man's allowance (£3455) regardless of whether or not his wife is working. If she is she can claim the equivalent of the single person's allowance (£2205) of tax-free income — though the earnings of around two million women are so low that they do not use up all this allowance. If a married woman is working and her husband is not she can claim the equivalent of the married man's allowance and the single person's allowance, a total of £5660 tax free income.

A transferable tax allowance system would abolish the married man's allowance. Where both partners were working both could claim the single person's allowance. Where only one was, she or he could claim the equivalent of two single person's allowance, ie a total of £4410 at current rates. This would shift the benefits of the tax system away from the two-earner married couple towards the one-earner couple. As either a man or woman could claim the allowance it is, on the surface, an egalitarian move.

However, as the Lords committee recognised, in most instances it would be a woman giving up her allowance while she was at home caring for children or relatives. Enhancing the income of her husband at this time would do nothing to reduce her dependency on his willingness to meet her — and their children's — needs. Regrettably we cannot assume that all men share resources within the family equally.

AND THEN THINK of what would happen when she returned to paid work. The Board of Inland Revenue envisage that her allowance, which her husband had been claiming, would be restored to her at once. If not she would face being taxed on the first pound she earned. Administratively, her return to employment will involve the husband's employer as well as her own. But worse, his take home pay will be reduced by at least £12 a week. So if his wife returns to work, he will have more domestic responsibilities (80 per cent of female evening and night workers, for instance, have children who have to be looked after) and less money in his pay packet. Many men will prefer their wives not to go back into the labour market.

As the committee recognised, in practice transferable tax allowances will act as a disincentive to married women to take up paid employment. That is not consistent with one of the aims of the EEC memorandum, namely to remove from the tax system any 'indirect adverse effect on women's employment, their right to work and their promotion in employment'. The committee therefore concluded that the needs of families dependent on one income would be better met by increasing cash benefits, such as child benefit, paid directly to the caring spouse.

To the government and its supporters (at least in the House of Commons) such a proposal is deemed politically and ideologically unsound. First, as *The Times* said, 'this would require an increase in (public) spending to make up for an increase in taxation, perpetrating a trend towards the ever greater State dominance in the economy that this government is rightly trying to arrest'. What they want to do is to decrease public spending on social welfare (if not on law and order and defence) in order to help finance future tax cuts.

As the oil revenues run out and there are no more State assets to sell off, the resources

needed to *sustain* the promised cuts will have to be found somewhere. As our social security system accounts for a third of public expenditure it is a prime target, as the White Paper bears out. Only in that sense is this government prepared to consider the two systems together. As a result cuts in benefits for the poor will be used to sustain tax cuts for the affluent. A more detailed look at the overall impact of *both* systems on the distribution of resources between different kinds of households, particularly between those with or without children or a disabled adult, is not happening. So much for the better 'targetting' of resources.

They are also unwilling to consider the substitution of cash benefits for tax allowances in the way recommended by the Lords committee because it is inconsistent with their view of the family. Reducing State dominance in the economy is one thing, reducing male dominance in the family is quite another.

Fowler's White Paper, contains many changes which will redistribute resources away from women and children towards men within the family. If there had not been such widespread support for child benefit from Conservative women as well as others, family credit would be replacing child benefit as well as family income supplement.

Moreover, unlike the committee's previous reports supporting EEC proposals to improve women's economic and social well being (in particular those concerning part-time workers and parental leave), this one affects *all* women. Many of those active across the political spectrum do not accept the view that treating women as individuals in their own right comes, in the words of *The Times*, 'perilously close to denying the existence of any co-operative intent in marriages'. As the representative of the National Federation of Women's Institutes told the Lords Committee: It seems dreadful to think one cannot have marriage and a family without some partner in it being treated unfairly'.

This government asserts that it is strengthening 'the family'. But as it unfolds its reforms of the social security and tax systems it is increasingly clear that its version of the family is rooted in inequality. And that is no longer acceptable to many of their own women supporters.



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MEDIA

# Aunty's rules: keep your gloves on

FRANCIS WHEEN

WHICH SHOCKS you most — a man forced to spend two and a half years of his life in a stinking jail for something he did not do, or some tough tactics to find out the facts to clear him?

That was the question with which Paul Foot began this column on the Anthony Mycock case (*NS* 13 December 1985), just after the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane, had severely criticised two journalists whose television programme *Rough Justice* had secured Mycock's release.

Lord Lane's attack on the pair, Martin Young and Peter Hill, was perhaps unsurprising. One would hardly expect a senior judge to look kindly on a programme whose aim is to expose miscarriages of justice. But what one might expect — had not recent experience taught one otherwise — is that the BBC would stand by its maligned employees; that it would point out that they had, in fact, performed a public service.

Fat chance. Last week they were suspended without pay for three months, given a 'severe — and final — warning' and told that they would not be employed in any form of BBC investigative journalism for two years.

This is outrageous. Yet it has caused no audible outrage at all. Silence from the *Guardian* leader column; silence from liberals and Lefties at the BBC; virtual silence from the NUJ, which daringly suggestesd that the sentence was a trifle 'harsh' but conceded that Young and Hill had been rather 'zealous' in their interviewing techniques.

And there's the heart of the problem. People at the BBC and NUJ who would normally take to the barricades over an issue like this tell one privately that, yes, of course, it's all most regrettable but, well, Young and Hill *did* rather overstep the mark in their interviews with Anne Fitzpatrick (the woman whose evidence put Mycock behind bars and who was shown by *Rough Justice* to be a thoroughly unreliable witness). Look at the transcripts of their interviews with her: *not* very savoury.

One's ability to take up this suggestion is hampered by the fact that the BBC is refusing to make the transcripts available.

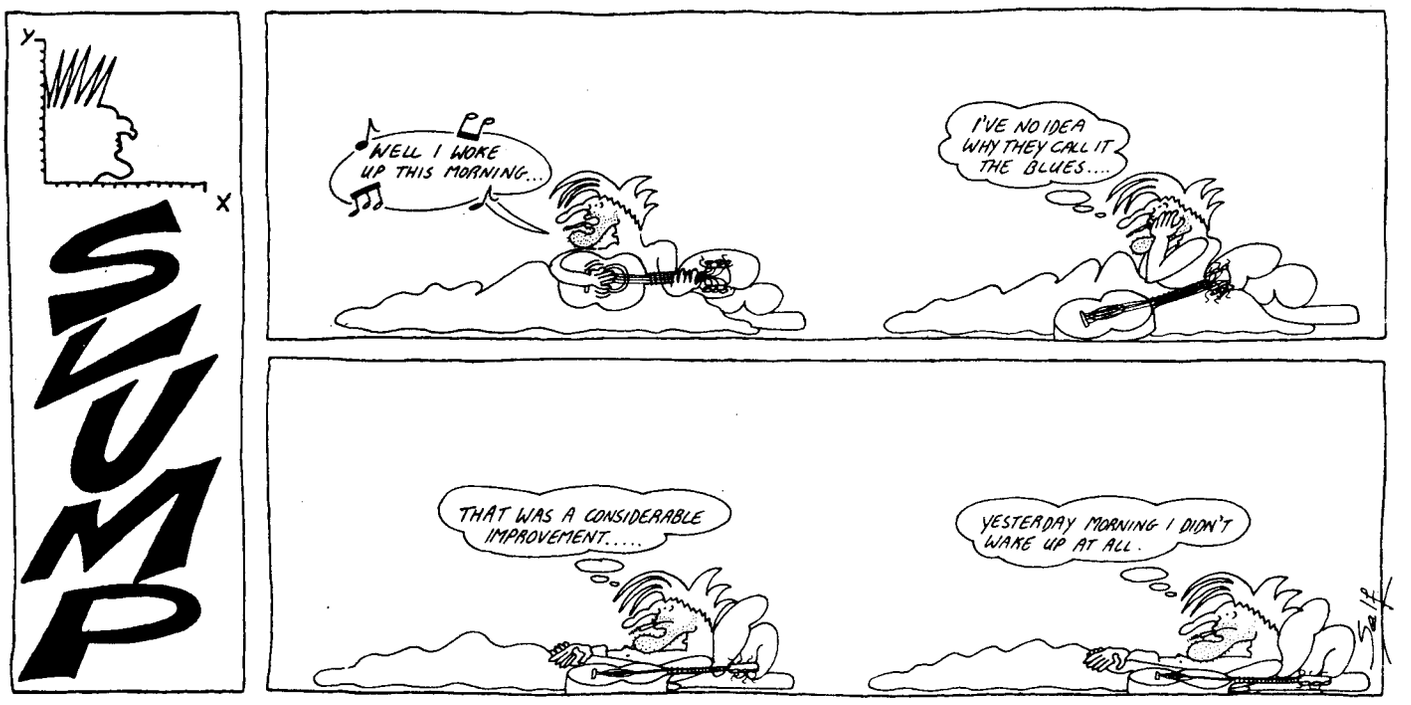
Anyone who overcomes this obstacle and discovers what the two journalists actually said will find that it isn't nearly as sinister as Lord Lane and the BBC make out. Indeed, even the BBC has been forced to admit that Lord Lane's most damaging and headline-grabbing suggestion — that Young and Hill threatened to expose Fitzpatrick as a lesbian if she didn't co-operate — was untrue.

THERE IS NO room here for a proper textual analysis of the interview with Fitzpatrick, but one example, which Lord Lane made much of, may give a flavour of the thing. Martin Young, interviewing Anne Fitzpatrick in America, tells her: 'If we don't have an interview with you in which we discover the truth about the burglary from your own lips, then we're obviously not just gonna get on a plane and go home, because we discovered, even in the last week or so, so much about the way in which you've been leaving false trails around here and so much about the things that you've said that are documented . . . which are not in fact true, that in order to show that Tony Mycock is innocent and was falsely accused by you, we would have to go on television in England and document line by line all the things that you've said since that occasion and in California, which are not true.'

Lord Lane described this as 'outrageous' intimidation, and the BBC has now apparently agreed. Yet is it? All Young is saying is that he already has ample evidence that she is a fantasiser and that her unsupported testimony is unreliable; if she admits as much it will make their task easier and her ordeal less humiliating, but even if she doesn't the programme will still go ahead. The Corporation now says that aggressive interviewing such as this brings the BBC 'into disrepute'. If so, presumably Roger Cook brought the BBC into disrepute week after week for many years with his famous crash-bang-wallop interviews for *Checkpoint*; presumably Esther Rantzen brings the BBC into disrepute when she harasses bent traders and the like.

There is one more point in the BBC's indictment of Young and Hill. Not only did they threaten Fitzpatrick, but also (as Bill Cotton put it in his letter to the pair) 'the transcripts of your discussion with Miss Fitzpatrick give a very clear indication that instead of approaching her as enquiring journalists you had a fixed idea of the truth which you then set out to prove'.

Well of course they did. So do most good journalists. In this instance, both *Rough Justice* and the charity called Justice had thoroughly investigated Mycock's case and had concluded that he was wrongfully convicted; Hill and Young went to see Fitzpatrick to put this to her and to persuade her to admit that her testimony had been false. What on earth is wrong with that? □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X
SUMP
WELL I WOKE UP THIS MORNING...
I'VE NO IDEA WHY THEY CALL IT THE BLUES....
THAT WAS A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT.....
YESTERDAY MORNING I DIDN'T WAKE UP AT ALL.



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# DIARY

Ian Williams

*Liverpool*

Now that Liverpool is a source of emigrant workers to half the world, the holiday season brings an ingathering of exiles, squeezing nostalgia from their homecoming by haunting their old dens of iniquity. It was in one of the more iniquitous of such, a spit and sawdust joint where they economise on the sawdust, that I came across Craig Charles, the young black poet. He'd tried elevating Terry Wogan's cultural level by reading his verse on the show for six weeks or so. He still managed a grin as he described how his new home in Hackney compounded geographical with social exile. The scion of the only mixed black/white family in suburban Cantril Farm, seeking economic asylum in Hackney, he's called whitey by the blacks, black by the more polite whites, and he says, 'They all hate Scousers in London anyway! So where the hell do you go from there?' Catch leprosy and put some truth in the rumours, I commiserated.

○

I love Liverpool, warts and all, despite pressure from some quarters to pretend that the warts are really diamonds. One of its more pleasant features is the number of genuine, usually self-taught, working-class intellectuals, who, for example, not only went theatre-going but established their own, like Unity or Vauxie Theatres. Some became writers and playwrights, or even MPs, but most just stayed on as didactic dockers, philosophical brickies, or are now taking doctorates in dole studies.

This week, I heard of their betrayal in the latest gasp of Pol Potism sweeping our beleaguered city. Obviously engaged in some form of unsocialist emulation campaign with the government, which has just pulled the financial rug from under the Empire Theatre and the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool City Council is hatcheting Burton Manor, its residential Adult Education College. One of the governors recounted that the chairman of the Education Committee, in tones dripping with contempt, told opponents in the packed meeting, 'You've got courses on *Astronomy*! What do working-class people want with *Astronomy*?'

○

New Year's Eve I sat with a friend, overlooking Bold St, once one of Liverpool's most affluent shopping streets. Our conversation was interrupted by a man who complained about government schemes for new enterprises. His bank wouldn't advance the collateral which the government demanded before lending assistance and he was continually being stopped and questioned by the police every night while going about his business. Scabrously curious, we asked what business had him walking the streets at night. Every night after closing time, he trudges the long miles in from the suburbs collecting empty drink cans off the streets — for their aluminium content!

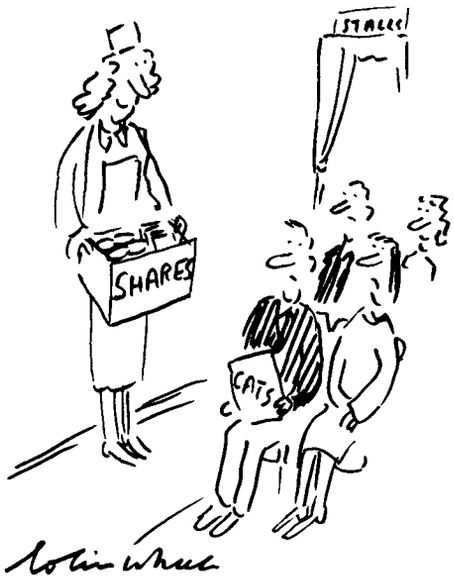
I shook my head in horror. In Calcutta, it is each tiny scrap of waste paper you see being collected. Eddy was unimpressed, reminding me of my own 'Third-Worldification' theory. He pointed behind me to a large new shop with SURPLUS all over the windows. 'Didn't you realise what that was?' he asked. 'What other city-centre could boast an *Oxfam* surplus shop!' I suppose it's all part of the Tory plan for a 'service' economy. If so, I've seen the future, and it stinks.

○

New Year in Liverpool is traditionally announced by the mournful monotone of ships' sirens in the port. There are many fewer ships nowadays but art beats decibels any day and celebrant anarchists on the ships played bass arpeggios through their hooters' limited scales. Some even sent up distress flares at the sinking of 1985. Looking back at 1985, there shouldn't have been that much distress at its passing. We survived — but only just.

○

1986 brings in the latest batch of job creation schemes for the lawyers — and arguments about whether the writ for libel will ever be served on Granada for the *World In Action* on Derek Hatton. (The original title was alleged to have been 'Yobs and Services'.) The




consensus is that libel action is about as likely as releasing the long promised tape of Neil Kinnock supporting the City Council strategy. 'Beware the Oscar Wilde scenario' the more literate bar-room soothsayers are warning Derek.

○

I'm introducing a Socialist New Year's Honour for services to selective amnesia and hypocrisy. It will be a medal with Mrs T on one side and St Francis of Assisi on the other. Winners need only fulfil two conditions. First, they have to say 'the programme was a capitalist media plot and anyway we're suing'. Second, they must have denounced unions in Liverpool threatened with redundancy for 'ergh, taking a, ergh, Socialist Council to the, ergh, Capitalist Courts'. Entries on the back of a redundancy notice to be sent to your local Revolutionary Socialist League Commissar (sorry, *Militant* seller).

○

Ann Holinshead, chair of the Arts Committee of the doomed County Council, is standing for Labour in a by-election for the City Council and so I went to canvass. Canvassing can be enjoyable or dispiriting, but it's always educational. Many usual Labour voters, to put it kindly, hadn't a lot of time for the council's deputy leader. But it's the issues *not* raised on the freezing doorsteps which worried me. Maybe years of Militant slogans and Liberal 'pavement' politics anaesthetise real anger. Major issues like unemployment and recession weren't mentioned, implying a fatalistic acceptance. Yet some Labour voters were still angry about the abolition of the Lord Mayor's position three years ago! Perhaps most puzzling in a city where the arrival of a dustbin lorry sometimes seems as frequent as the docking of the Flying Dutchman was a complaint from one woman about the *emptying* of her bin. Bewildered canvassers then noticed her litter-strewn front garden. A physical metaphor perhaps for pavement politics without a national outlook. Rubbish politics!

# ROGER WODDIS

## No, Prime Minister

(Or, The Solitude of Michael Heseltine)

I am walking on eggshells today,
  My right appears ready to shoot,
From the centre to left, so they say,
  I am seen as a traitorous brute.
O solitude! where are the charms
  My Leader once saw in my face?
Better live far removed from her arms
  Than live in her deadly embrace.

I am out of Her Vanity's reach,
  I must pilot my chopper alone,
Never slump when I'm making a speech,
  Or jump at her voice on the phone.
My colleagues who call me insane
  For not going down on one knee
Would like to stick pins in my brain
  And put a strong drug in my tea.

But I'll beat them by beating my chest,
  And go ape on the Westland affair;
If Sikorsky and Fiat know best,
  I'll put a blue streak in my hair.
The workers can jump in the lake,
  What matters is playing the game;
O may they forget what's at stake —
  But let them remember my name!



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Camera Press

# REAGAN RETREATS FROM THE FRAY

**Economic sanctions and verbal assault against Colonel Gadafy (above) have replaced the military reprisal that Washington was planning. CLAUDIA WRIGHT explains**

Washington

ACCORDING TO A THRILLER *The Hunt for Red October*, that everyone in Washington from President Reagan down to the night watch officer at the Pentagon has read, the captain of a new Soviet submarine tries to defect to the US, taking the secrets of his submarine with him. The defector's motive is revenge for a botched medical procedure in which an incompetent Soviet surgeon allowed the submarine captain's wife to die.

Ironically, an American naval surgeon at the Bethesda Naval Hospital was charged by a military court recently for a series of fatally botched operations — but no matter. In this fiction, which is the thinking American's Rambo, US intelligence, medicine, food, naval technology, and military electronics are far superior to the Soviet models. Soviet navy efforts to hunt the defecting sub down are defeated and the White House, CIA and the navy bask in self-satisfaction.

That this is illusion should be obvious from the way the US-Libyan confrontation has fizzled out this week. On 3 January — the day the *USS Coral Sea* carrier task force left Naples, a battleship and second carrier prepared to sail from the US. Navy electronic warfare aircraft flew to Sigonella in Sicily — officials in Washington were so convinced an attack on Libya was imminent that they cancelled at least one Congressional visit to the Mediterranean.

The Congressional officials were to have visited Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey, but their presence so close to the scene of the Libyan action suggested they might have become targets for retaliation. After the weekend, however, the official view that was leaked from the Administration was that a military attack was no longer likely.

Ostensibly, the reason was that Admiral William Crowe, the fresh Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Vice Admiral John Poindexter, the new National Security Advisor to the President, had concluded there were virtually no targets that the US could bomb in Libya that could be directly tied to Abu Nidal's faction of the PLO, or to the preparations for the Rome and Vienna airport attacks on 27 December. In fact, US officials had found that their military build-up had been preempted by the Soviets, who had made it visibly but silently clear that Moscow had decided to counter any move the Americans (or the Israelis) intended to make.

While erstwhile US military experts have tried to downplay the effectiveness of the SA-5 long-range anti-aircraft missiles which the Soviets began installing in Libya last October, the presence of the missile batteries and their Soviet crews posed a direct threat to a B-52 bombing run of the kind the Administration once demonstrated over Cairo, after President Sadat's assassination. The SA-5s also threatened any slow-flying radar surveillance planes or fuel tankers that the US would depend on for an attack. And while the US media publicised the presence of the SA-5 missiles, they did not reveal the delivery of additional shipments of SA-6 missiles for low and medium altitude defence, firing vehicles and Soviet crews, which began to arrive in Libya just before the movement of the US fleet.

The new SA-5s and SA-6s, in addition to existing SA-6, SA-8, SA-9, and SA-13 batteries the Soviets and East Germans have installed for Libya, gave Colonel Gadafy a highly mobile, all-range air defence that was far stronger and more comprehensive than anyone in Washington or Jerusalem wanted publicly to concede. It enabled him to disperse his French and Soviet aircraft to the south and, in relying solely on ground-based missile defences, to cheat the Sixth Fleet of the kind of aerial dogfight they could dominate — as they had in the Gulf of Sirte incident of August 1981.

THE SOVIET MILITARY presence — in excess of 2,000 men — sharply raised the stakes of an American assault, just as it had deterred earlier ideas of an Israeli one. Though Reagan Administration officials have not been known to have any regard for Arab lives, they have been very cautious to avoid clashes between US or Israeli forces and those of the Soviet Union. Warnings from Moscow had done much to inhibit the US-backed Israeli drive on Beirut in June 1982 (see *NS* 18 June 1982), and even earlier — at the time of Gadafy's 1969 coup d'etat in Libya, when a large Soviet naval formation had effectively screened the eastern Libyan coast from a US or British effort to fly to the rescue of King Idris's discredited regime.

This time, we have learned, Soviet electronic specialists on board surface ships in the southern Mediterranean, plus the crews on the ground in Libya, were prepared to counter US jamming techniques and those the Israelis used against Syrian missile sites in 1982. The preparations for an electronics war were intense by both superpowers.

It is one thing for US navy technology to outwit its Soviet counterparts in pulp fiction, or on the cinema screen. It is quite another for the Reagan Administration to risk such a conflict over a country even the Israelis dismiss as having no strategic significance. With their PhDs in international politics and nuclear physics, Admirals Crowe and Poindexter were bound to acknowledge this point. And so, after the vaunted celebration of the *Achille Lauro*



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# PERES TAKES A NEW LINE

*Tel Aviv*

ISRAEL'S PRIME Minister Shimon Peres has caled Colonel Gadafy despicable and has described Libya in Reaganesque terms as 'a wicked country.' But he has taken the view that Libya and the Abu Nidal faction of the PLO are a problem that the international community must settle.

The response is interesting because it is quite different from his reaction last year to the PLO hijacking of the *Achille Lauro*, for the PLO killing of three Israeli yachtsmen in Cyprus. The difference partly reflects the fact that only one of the 15 passengers killed in the Rome and Vienna airport massacres was Israeli, though Israel's airline, El Al, was the target. It also reflects a changed political climate in Israel.

When Peres authorised the bombing of the PLO's Tunis headquarters on 1 October last year to avenge the Cyprus killings, he was on the point of pushing an Israeli peace initiative onto a reluctant cabinet. A tough military response was necessary to placate the hawkish Likud ministers, who still suspect that Peres is ready to 'sell-out' occupied territories to the PLO.

Peres, normally acutely sensitive to the international repercussions of Israeli actions, could not afford at such a moment to look soft at home. He weathered the international condemnation of the Tunis bombing, which killed more than 70 people, and gained considerable political capital at home. Peres was helped by the PLO's inept hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* nine days later.

The airport massacres, however, came at a time when Peres was no longer pressing any peace initiative. Not only his own Labour Party, but several Likud ministers and officials too, at once stressed the importance of getting international support for Israel's position. The government's current aim is to seek international cooperation and to isolate countries, like Libya, which back terrorism. However, the Likud has refused to draw any practical distinction between Abu Nidal and Yasser Arafat, even though the two former PLO colleagues have been mortal enemies for the past twelve years.

Rather than take a new peace initiative, which the Likud would certainly oppose, Peres is now more interested in wooing King Hussein of Jordan back to the US-Israel-Egypt axis. The first step has been to improve relations with Egypt by agreeing, against Likud wishes, to settle a festering border dispute by international arbitration. The second step has been to canvass international support for Peres's call for direct talks about the Middle East under some kind of international auspices, which he outlined in his speech to the United Nations on 21 October last.

Publicly, Peres has said that when the Syrian President Hafez Assad met King Hussein his main hope was to persuade Jordan to cut its ties with Arafat, whose independent line Syria detests. Hussein has not forgotten Assad's support for the PLO in Jordan which almost cost him his throne in 1971. But even if Arafat is the issue it is not clear that moderate Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories would take part in negotiations without the authority of the PLO leadership, whatever their personal readiness to accept Israel and to eschew violence.

Radical Palestinians, like the editor of the daily *Al-Fajr*, Hanna Siniora, believes that Arafat cannot be expected to recognise Israel until Israel recognises the Palestinian right to statehood. Even the smaller pro-Jordan group, led by men like Bethlehem mayor, Elias Freij, still refuse to join talks without PLO backing.

Most observers think that Syria will not tolerate being excluded from any peace process and would prefer war with Israel or with Jordan to losing its growing influence in the region. A recent poll in the daily *Haaretz* indicated that 49 per cent of the adult population of Israel think that war with Syria is in fact likely this year.

One Likud official, who asked to remain anonymous, expressed quiet satisfaction that Syria had interrupted the peace process. 'Jordan has withdrawn from Peres's peace plan, but Peres doesn't know it yet,' he said. The remark goes some way to explaining why Likud ministers have voiced almost no criticism of Peres's efforts in the past month. For no 'Jordanian option' means no need for territorial concessions.

**Jonathan Beer**

interception (see *NS* 18 October 1985), the US navy, Admirals Crowe and Poindexter and the Reagan Administration had no alternative this time but to back down.

There are several sobering lessons in this affair. The Americans have compromised their policy towards terrorism so often now and so inflated the rhetoric of anti-terrorism that it has become a flag of convenience for an enormous variety of causes — many with little directly to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict. US oil refiners in Texas and Louisiana, for example, have manipulated the issue to ward off competition from Libyan imports in the domestic US market for naphtha and fuel oil. They would have been the first to recommend a B-52 bombing strike against the newly completed Libyan refinery at Ras Lanuf. Decisions on US economic sanctions have become pawns in which bureaucratic empires created at the State and Defense Departments conspire to defeat rivals in the trade bureaucracy who see European or Asian competitors picking up contracts in Libya from which US companies are excluded.

More fundamentally, the confrontation with Tripoli demonstrates once again how violent the Reagan Administration's instincts are, how militarily incompetent and politically inept. In this case, it took almost a week before reality fully dawned on them. By then they had dealt their adversaries — the Libyans and Soviets — a stronger hand than the latter can have expected or perhaps deserved, while weakening whatever allies US policy aims to support. As naturally as most US officials and journalists take for granted that murdering Colonel Gadafy is a good and lawful objective to pursue, they don't understand how little this policy will avail them when the risks of death or downfall are much greater in Libya's pro-American neighbours.

The Sudanese president has already disappeared, the Chadian one is hanging on with difficulty; the internal situation is deteriorating in Tunisia. If Egypt's President Mubarak is discredited and threatened with overthrow this year because of his political and economic debts to Washington, what can the Reagan Administration offer to reassure or to save him? Already, Mubarak has taken the precautionary move of asking Moscow for Soviet anti-aircraft missiles to defend his territory.

MODERN TIMES

# THE MEDIUM GETS OVER THE MESSAGE

**Faced with falling membership and a hostile Reagan Administration, US trade unions are changing their methods. DAVE PEERS and BERYL RICHARDS report**

WHEN THE TRADITIONAL messages of trade union solidarity get transmitted in the style and language of the advertising industry, it is hard not to feel that this is, well, unseemly. It's a bit like the feeling you get watching Neil Kinnock trying to dance with Tracy Ullman.

But the American labour movement has no such inhibitions. It has embraced the techniques of advertising and the new communications technology with enthusiasm.

It started back in 1975, when the International Ladies Garment Workers Union ran a series of TV ads urging Americans 'to look for the union label' on the clothing they bought. But the high cost of television advertising made other unions reluctant to follow the ILGWU's example.

Now the situation has shifted dramatically. The 1981-2 recession and the new aggressive anti-union mood of both employers and the Reagan Administration convinced them of the need to find new ways of making good their loss of members and political influence. At the same time video and satellite communications and the growth of cable TV has brought low budget broadcasting within their reach.

And they are taking full advantage. The Autoworkers have just celebrated their 50th anniversary with a TV image campaign full of flags, families and song to show the union's contribution to the American Way. The Teachers and the Communication Workers are putting out regular public interest and feature programmes for cable and public service TV channels. The Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) run frequent video news conferences via satellite and produce a weekly audio news release for radio stations. At least eight unions have also developed their own internal video networks and produce regular video bulletins for their members.

To co-ordinate this movement to 'Electronic Solidarity' the AFL-CIO (America's TUC) established the Labor Institute of Public Affairs in 1981. LIPA runs media training courses for union officers, produces a TV feature programme, 'America Works', and a video newsletter which individual unions are encouraged to use in their own bulletins or features. They have also run pilot studies for a labour channel on cable TV.

Typical of this new eagerness to use the media is the 'Mama' campaign waged by the



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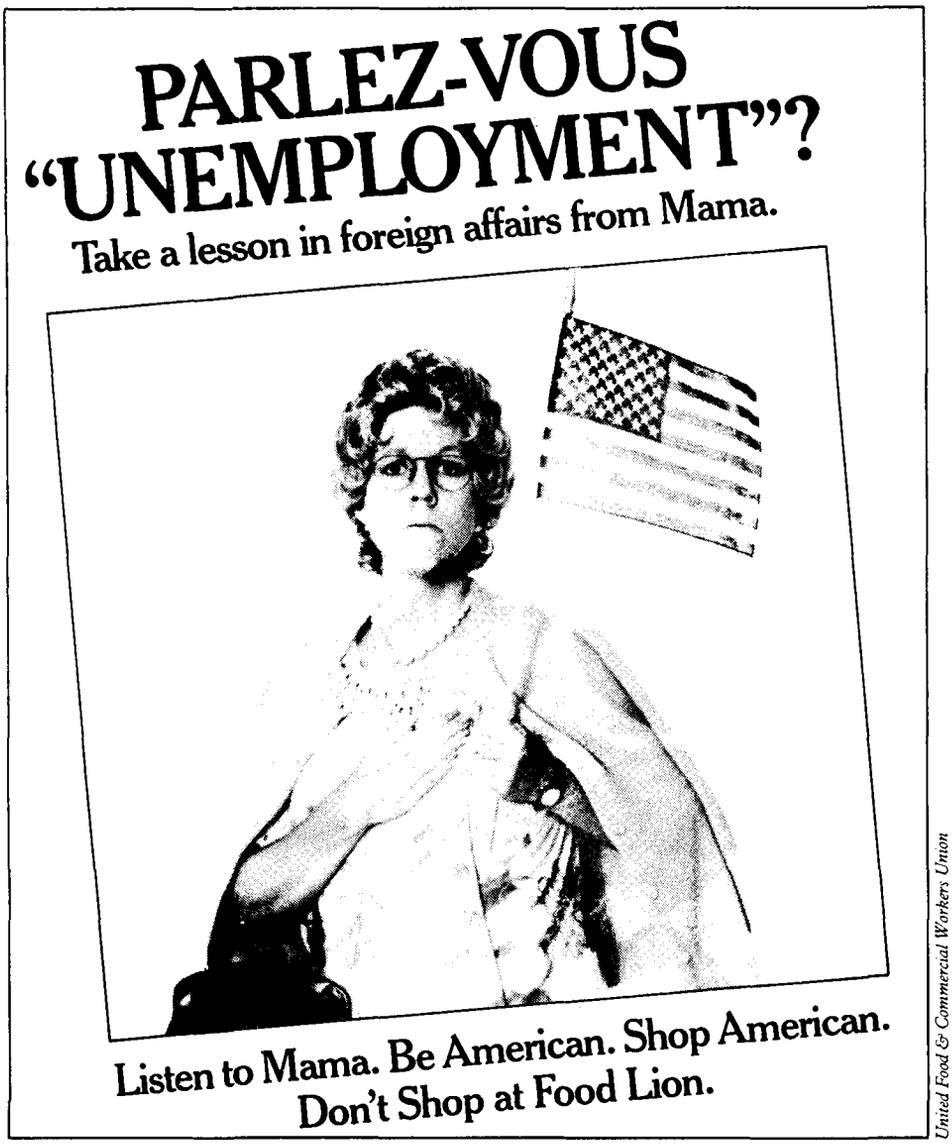
PARLEZ-VOUS "UNEMPLOYMENT"?
Take a lesson in foreign affairs from Mama.
Listen to Mama. Be American. Shop American.
Don't Shop at Food Lion.

United Food & Commercial Workers Union

United Food and Commercial Workers, now the largest union in the AFL-CIO. Mama is a television character, played by actress Vicki Lawrence, who won fame on the NBC-networked 'Carol Burnett Show'. She is a cantankerous old lady who speaks her mind in a folksy, no nonsense way. She is also funny.

By using Mama, the UFCW is hoping to get through to the new generation of workers in the growing service industries who are familiar with television but have few union traditions. Employing an established TV personality has also made it easier to get the ads accepted by television stations. 'Labor's message traditionally has been moralistic and preachy', says Alan Zack, the union's communications director. 'We wanted a character who would come out and say "that ain't right".'

Mama buys American. She doesn't cross picket lines. She encourages women to fight sexual harassment, to join a union. The punch line of the commercial is usually delivered by Vicki Lawrence as herself. 'A union can help. I know; I belong to four.' Lawrence is a registered Republican but she gives her personal endorsement to the campaign and has spoken on union platforms.

The ads normally feature the Stars and Stripes somewhere in the picture. In the Reagan era everyone is 'proud to be American' and the unions have not hesitated to wrap the flag around their TV messages, or to lean heavily on patriotic appeals to back their demand for controls on foreign imports. 'Jingoism is selling well this year', was Alan Zack's comment. An Electrical Workers union car sticker is more direct — 'Unemployment — made in Japan'.

The Mama commercials are well-produced, professional — and expensive. The union is spending $2-3 million on her, but she is only one part of the UFCW recruitment drive. It targets a particular region or city, specific supermarket chains and buys airtime on the area TV channels. The local union branches put pickets on the stores, place advertisements in the local papers and part-pay for the TV slots. This combined attack usually makes storeowners amenable to union recognition.

THE UFCW is now one of the fastest growing unions in the AFL-CIO. It put on over 65,000 members in 1984. This growth is remarkable when set against the general stagnation of the American trade union movement. Only 15 per cent of workers in the private sector are now unionised and the unions overall have lost nearly a quarter of their membership in manufacturing in the last four years.

This has forced American unions to look again at their organisation and strategy. Last February they produced a policy document entitled 'The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions' which made the following recommendations:

- To make an organising drive on the service sector and high tech industries; and to make union services available to unorganised workers.
- To supplement industrial action with campaigning designed to win wide public support.
- To overhaul the unions' communications and public relations machines to improve links between the membership and promote a better public image.
- To make their political lobbying more effective, particularly on the issues of trade protection and labour law reform.

None of this, though, is important unless it can help the central job of winning disputes with employers. Last year's strike by the Airline Pilots Association against United Airlines showed that it could do just that.

The issue in the strike was United's move to introduce a two-tier system of payment for pilots, which would have put new recruits on a substantially lower rate for most of their working lives. ALPA knew that the union's existence rested on the outcome. Two years previously they had been badly beaten when Continental Airlines tore up its contract with the union and cut wage rates.

So they prepared carefully to make sure that there would be no strike breaking this time. They had to organise 5,500 United pilots scattered all over the US. Well before the strike they produced videos which explained the issues and prepared their members for the financial and legal problems they might meet. They used video because they knew that 90 per cent of their members owned VCRs and they organised a distribution system that pulled the members together. Activists would show the tapes to ten other members, each of whom would be given tapes to show to ten others.

To link their widely distributed membership ALPA used satellite teleconferences. To combat possible hostile media coverage they had all their nine press centres open to the press 24 hours a day and produced their own video newscasts from the picket lines which were made available to the networks on satellite and to the members by tape cassettes.

They even had their own strikers' song — based on the hit 'We are Family'. It was called 'We are Family — a United Family'. They left nothing to chance.

After 29 days of strike action the company backed down and withdrew its proposals. ALPA produced 40 videos in the course of the dispute — 15 before the strike — and spent $2 million on video altogether. It was a brilliant example of how the new technology can be used to achieve traditional union goals.

How many other unions have the money to emulate the pilots remains to be seen. The British trade union movement faces similar problems to the American unions and could learn a lot from what is happening in the United States. Saatchi and Saatchi did.

*Dave Peers and Beryl Richards recently spent several weeks examining how the American trade union movement is using video, TV and radio advertising, cable TV and satellite. They brought back examples of the new work being done, which can be seen by appointment with Smith Bundy Video, 10a The Pavement, London SW4 0HY, 01-627 1109.*



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# LETTERS

## Mercury in the Mersey

*Trevor Turpin, Bath*

While G. Diprose (Letters 20-27 December) claims that a Minamata situation is not developing on Merseyside, by introducing the red herring of inorganic mercury not being associated with Minamata, he makes the same 'error' as the Chisso Corporation (responsible for the mercury discharges at Minamata Bay). After the discovery of the 'disease' in 1956 Chisso continued to discharge for a further 12 years claiming their discharges of inorganic mercury were harmless even though their own chemist had shown as early as 1959 that inorganic mercury was methylated by microbial action into the toxic organic form. (He was subsequently prevented from carrying out further experiments (Smith & Smith *Minamata* New York 1975)).

Although ICI discharges inorganic mercury it does not follow that this cannot be converted to toxic organic mercury in the sea, estuaries and fishing grounds in the vicinity of the Mersey Estuary and Liverpool Bay.

G. Diprose will be aware of this but perpetuates a myth in the name of science in order that ICI can continue their current level of discharges. It is annoying that an 'Environmental Adviser' — employed by the discharger — should see fit not to include all the facts in this manner. This only serves to strengthen the case for impartial monitoring of both private and public dischargers (an ICI executive is a member of the 13-person North West Water Authority) especially when Water Authorities are threatened with privatisation.

*Ian Williams, Liverpool*

Methinks ICI doth protest too much. My figure of 80 per cent reduction in mercury discharge from their Runcorn plant referred to just that, and not to their 95 per cent removal of mercury in the effluent.

But the main point of the article was that there was already an appalling historical level of contamination, of a cumulative poison, and any addition was going to bring that even closer to the environmental quality standard. It is the North West Water Authority which feels that their standard is likely to be reduced, and it is their documents which mention Minamata.

## Child's play

*Peter Watson, Wolston, Coventry*

Sally Vincent's article (*NS* 20-27 December) insulted children. The gist of the argument seemed to be that promoted and packaged toys such as Love Bears, Barbies and Transformers kill the imaginative play and free expression of children. This in turn paves the way for a generation of servile and obedient automata.

Children are not to be so easily duped. They are much more perceptive, resilient, inventive and imaginative than that. If one takes the time to watch a child playing with one of the toys Sally Vincent objects to, one will often see the most complex little stories being acted out, often in ways, I am sure, that the manufacturers do not expect.

Sally Vincent criticized some manufactured toys for being 'useless things'. Transformers, the toy that can change its shape from car/plane to robot and back again, is no more useless than the match box and Dinky cars of previous generations.

*Ian Trigg, London E11*

Sally Vincent's analysis of current children's products is perceptive and interesting. Her conclusions, however, seem hackneyed and pessimistic, giving no credit to the spontaneity of childhood imagination or the nature of children's perspectives. Her fears for children are two-fold: the robbery of their imagination and the ideological implications of (particularly) Judge Dredd.

The first issue has a familiar ring. The death-knell of children's imagination has been sounded before, with the advent of radio and later TV. Does it seem likely that where these powerful media have failed, a toy's accompanying instructions, probably unreadable to many young owners, are likely to succeed? The marketing and packaging ploys she describes appeal to the (adult) buyer not the (child) end-user. I should imagine most children pay as much attention to instructions with toys as most adults do to 'serving suggestions' on food cans.

As to Judge Dredd's values it is not surprising that nine-year-old Max fails to appreciate the irony which surrounds them. Like much good writing and illustration for children *2000 AD* can be read at a different level by adults. To the adult reader the Judge is a numskull surrounding himself with baroque, silly trappings of power. But, surely a story which, on its first page, states: 'The citizen has no rights . . .' could hardly be seen as positive propaganda for the new Right as Vincent suggests. Compare this with an earlier ideologically-doubtful, lantern-jawed hero, Dan Dare. His Aryan perfection was pitted against hideous humanoid deformities. *2000 AD* may reflect different political priorities, but, in my opinion, does so more consciously and responsibly than many previous comic heroics.

## Playing with apartheid

*Professor Norman Lewis, Faculty of Law, University of Sheffield*

I wish to reply to Stephen Daniels (Letters 13 December) on the issue of the judges and apartheid given the constitutional importance of the matter.

I should reiterate that the House of Lords did not adopt the reasons put forward by Mr Daniels for their decision. Lord Roskill, delivering the majority judgment, said that Leicester City Council had arrived at their decision in an 'unfair manner' without specifying what was unfair. Lord Templeman rejected the Council's action since the Leicester Rugby Club had 'committed no wrong' (in law as opposed to morals). If the DHSS rejects my claim for a fuel allowance since they believe I should live in a smaller flat they are acting lawfully even though I have 'committed no wrong'. The judges, I fear, are playing a three card trick.

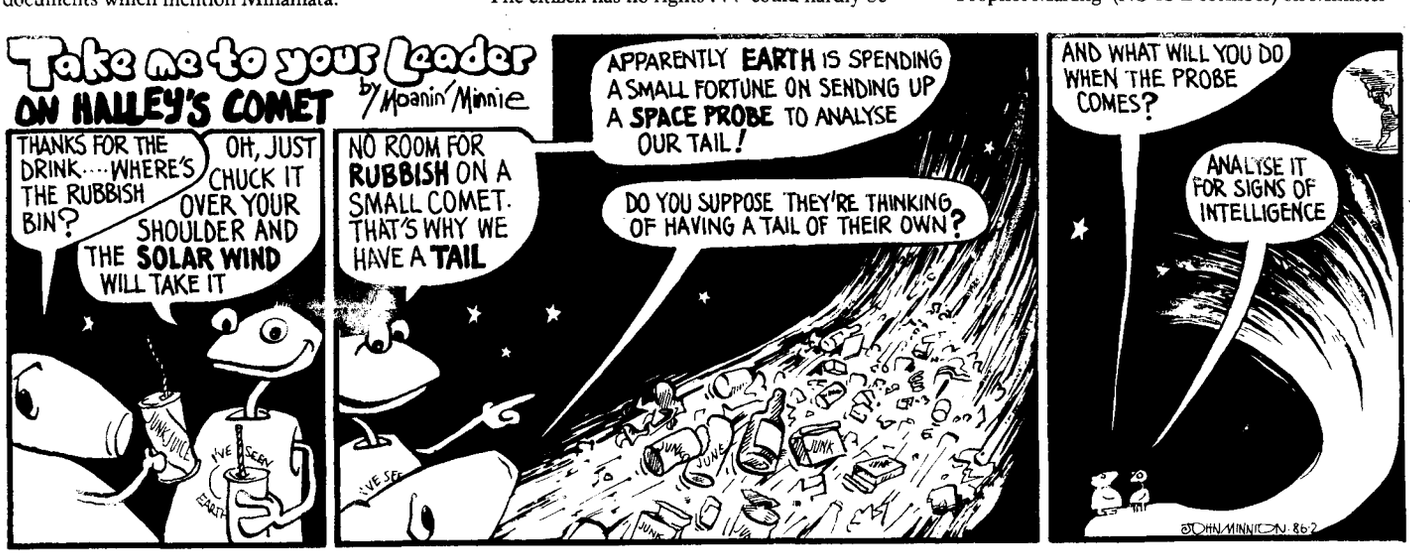
However, Mr Daniels prefers the judgment of Lord Justice Browne-Wilkinson in the court below even though it is not only muddle-headed but not even good judicial scripture after the decision of the House. He is right that one must not take irrelevant considerations into account but the Gleneagles Agreement, as Sir George Waller made clear, urges signatories to combat apartheid by taking '. . . *every* practical step to discourage apartheid . . .' Irrelevant, Mr Daniels?

What is more worrying is Lord Roskill's view that the judges may continue to innovate in this area, thus further blurring the line between political and judicial decisions. That is what concerns me as a constitutional lawyer.

## In defence of the Nation of Islam

*Cllr Lester Lewis, London Borough of Hackney*

Dr Manning Marable's article 'In the Business of Prophet Making' (*NS* 13 December) on Minister


Take me to your Leader
ON HALLEY'S COMET
by Moanin' Minnie
THANKS FOR THE DRINK.... WHERE'S THE RUBBISH BIN?
OH, JUST CHUCK IT OVER YOUR SHOULDER AND THE SOLAR WIND WILL TAKE IT
JUNK JUICE
I'VE SEEN EARTH
NO ROOM FOR RUBBISH ON A SMALL COMET. THAT'S WHY WE HAVE A TAIL
I'VE SEEN
APPARENTLY EARTH IS SPENDING A SMALL FORTUNE ON SENDING UP A SPACE PROBE TO ANALYSE OUR TAIL!
DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY'RE THINKING OF HAVING A TAIL OF THEIR OWN?
JUNK
AND WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN THE PROBE COMES?
ANALYSE IT FOR SIGNS OF INTELLIGENCE
©JOHN MINNION 86



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Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam is confusing. Marable has made the same error that Labour Party theorists have made, i.e. to use a sociological approach to analyse a developing political phenomenon.

Marable has clearly failed to grasp the essence of Pan Africanism/Black Nationalism in the US and the current developments within the Black Liberation Movement. Thus, his sociological analysis is made in the context of Black progressives and the broader US Left 'articulating a democratic socialist alternative in the era of Reaganism.'

Reaganism, like Thatcherism in Britain, is a misnomer for capitalism in crisis with political leaders who use all forms of violence to oppress and exploit designated minorities in the name of the national interest. The fact that the white Left in Britain has splintered under the Tory onslaught is a direct result of its inherent inability to mount any form of sustained resistance to Thatcher and Co. That some so-called Labour Leftists are joining Kinnock and the right wing in an anti-progressive, anti-working-class alliance is indicative that careerism and opportunism are the dominant elements in their political make-up. Working-class people are not reassured by this. Black people even less so.

Given this political development in Britain, with its strong radical and socialist traditions, what then of the US where no such traditions exist? Marable's solution of an alliance of Black progressives and the white US Left is a bad dream since such an alliance has singularly failed to get off the ground.

Black nationalist groups in the US have long denounced the white Left for trying to colonise Black people's struggles and then running for cover when the going gets tough. The Black experience of COINELPRO, the counter attack on the Black Liberation Movement by a network of FBI infiltrators, forced the movement to re-examine its methods, tactics and organisation. One of the first results of this was the emergence of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition.

It was Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam which gave that campaign impetus and credibility. The Nation has emerged as one of the liberating forces that has come out of the poverty and powerlessness of the South Side in Chicago. It was these same forces which initiated the process of getting Harold Washington elected as Mayor of Chicago and broke the back of the white-dominated Democratic Party machine in that city.

Farrakhan's critics are opposed to his economic programme. But they are not attacking People Organised and Working for Economic Rebirth (POWER) directly. Instead, they are creating a diversion by attacking the Minister and the Nation as anti-semites. According to the Nation of Islam, the massive purchasing power of Black Americans, which is greater that that of Britain, must be harnessed to create jobs for Blacks. They do not advocate seizing land from bankrupt western farmers. They advocate buying the land. Farrakhan and the Nation have called forth a powerful United Front of Christians, Moslems, Agnostics, Nationalists, Pan Africanists and Socialists, i.e. an African United Front.

The point about POWER is this. Since no one is going to create jobs for Blacks either in Britain or America, Black people have to use their own genius and talent to lift themselves out of poverty, unemployment and powerlessness. The Nation of Islam therefore offers hope for the future. Contrast this with the situation in Britain where the Greater London Council created a dependency syndrome among Blacks. With its demise comes forth the begging bowl. The lesson should be clear.

Farrakhan is due to address two meetings in London in February.

## Mrs Whitehouse will decide

*Mary Hayward, Campaign against Censorship*

We have the greatest respect for Geoffrey Robertson's expertise but about Winston Churchill's Obscene Publications Bill (*NS* 13 December) he is mistaken.

The Bill as announced (*Hansard*, 4 December) would amend section 1 of the Obscene Publications Act 1959 'by making further provision with regard to the test of obscenity in the case of an article . . . disseminated through the medium of television or sound broadcasting'. In other words, those media would be subject not to the old deprave-and-corrupt test, but to the test of obscenity as defined by Mrs Whitehouse.

Thanks to section 2 of the Video Recordings Act, we know what that means. The section contains just the sort of list which Mr Robertson supposes cannot be drawn up, but so vaguely worded as to encompass quite easily not only pornographic violence but programmes dealing with sexual orientation, rape, the treatment of political prisoners, child abuse, riots, vivisection, sexually transmitted diseases or even childbirth.

Ms Smith is right to sound alarm bells. This Bill might leave broadcasting in the UK no better off than broadcasting in South Africa, and the campaign of disinformation about it is already well under way.

## Mrs T sidesteps Strasbourg

*Owen Davies, Middle Temple, London EC4*

The piece by Geoffrey Robertson was a fresh and helpful look at the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Bill.

If Mrs Thatcher is in favour of the Bill together with other unlikely champions of civil liberties we must look for reasons why that should be so.

Could it be that they believe that the English judges will interpret the rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Convention more restrictively than do the European Commission and Court? And could it be that, once the Bill has incorporated the Convention into English Law, the government would be able to justify withdrawing the right of individual petition to Strasbourg?

## The flight from UNESCO

*Gerald Frost, Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies*

If you are prepared to indulge him, Christopher Price is perfectly entitled to whip himself into a state of moral frenzy over the UK government's decision to leave UNESCO (*NS* 13 December). However, Mr Price should not permit his hysteria to blind his perception of reality.

This Institute, which is alleged to have played a significant, indeed sinister, role in the matter, is *not* an affiliate of the Heritage Foundation; it is an independent educational trust registered under British charity law. As such, we do not engage in campaigning or lobbying activity, nor did we do so on this occasion.

Our principal activity in relation to the debate over UNESCO was the staging of a debate between Owen Harries, the former Australian Ambassador to UNESCO, and Richard Hoggart, a former Director General of the organisation, at the Royal Overseas Club in October 1984. Harries argued that Britain and other Western countries should get out — and that it was in their own interests and that of the Third World to do so. Hoggart argued that we should remain, while seeking reform. Among those participating was an official UNESCO representative, former UNESCO employees, members of the United Nations Association and a number of journalists with an interest in the subject. If a vote had been taken it would have almost certainly gone in favour of remaining within UNESCO. If Mr Price truly believes that this occasion served as a sinister tool in a campaign of 'US thought control' one fears for his mental well-being.

If, as I take it, the phrase 'UK acolytes' of the Heritage Foundation is intended to apply to myself and colleagues, the description of us as 'ex-communists or ex-liberals', religious fanatics who are said to look back to a golden age and who are alleged to thrive on money from exploitation of the Third World while conducting a campaign of disinformation, is so ridiculous as to be laughable. We do not receive funds from the Third World; we are none of us ex-communists or even ex-liberals; I doubt whether occasional attendance of the Church of England (which is the best that the most zealous of us can manage) quite marks us out as religious fanatics; political nostalgia is not our bag; and we are quite content to leave the job of disinformation to Mr Price.

## Why Labour fears change

*William Wallace, London SW17*

Islander's farewell column (*NS* 20-27 December) hit at the central failure of British socialism: the failure to tackle constructive reform of Britain's institutions, Parliament, the role of the Crown, the relationship between central and local government.

I find the Labour Party's conservatism on the role of Parliament most astonishing. I can understand the reluctance to face up to the contradictions of our electoral system, which ties even Peter Kellner up in knots. I have noted him arguing that a qualified majority requirement can be used to outwit David Owen's proposals for a referendum on electoral reform not many weeks after confidently asserting that Labour can hope for single party government on some 37 or 38 per cent of the popular vote. If *he's* that confused about democracy and legitimacy, then no wonder most Labour party members are unable to think straight on constitutional issues.

I have relished most in the past few months the spectacle of Austin Mitchell, in a television discussion on what would happen if no party comes out of the next election with an overall majority, quoting a precedent of 1830 to demonstrate that Labour could take office on its own as the largest single party. It's interesting to note that he (along with other Labour constitutionalists) is such a strong supporter of the political role of the monarchy, early 19th Century style. I long to ask him how many other political and constitutional rules from 1830 the Labour Party approves of: rotten boroughs, electoral bribery, perhaps?

It is tragic that the Labour Party's fear that any constitutional changes (except the abolition of the House of Lords) would undermine its entrenched position within the established two-party system has pushed it into such a conservative position. If, like Islander, we accept that changes in parliamentary habits and in the style of political debate are essential 'to give voice to what is happening' in a declining Britain and to 'be able to argue for a plausible alternative', then Labour MPs must overcome that fascination with the ritual of the Commons — and socialists must face up to the issue of representative democracy.

Yes, I know it would mean thinking about coalitions, and having to deal with those dreadful Liberals. But you did say you believed in *democratic* socialism, didn't you?



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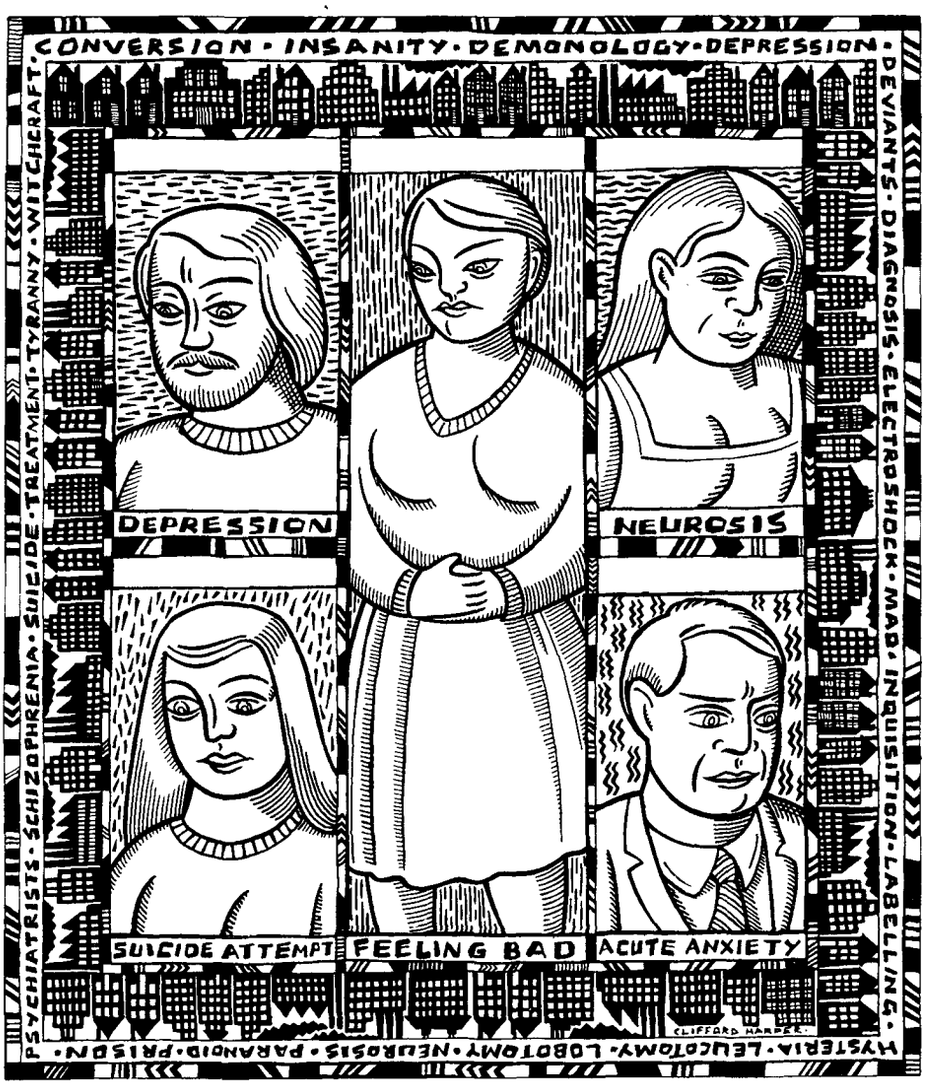
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DEPRESSION
NEUROSIS
SUICIDE ATTEMPT
FEELING BAD
ACUTE ANXIETY
CLIFFORD HARPER

*Clifford Har*

# LAST DAYS OF THE ASYLUM

*Should mental hospitals, once regarded with dread as punitive places from which there was no escape, be finally closed, or kept open as refuges for the seriously ill? DAVE BERRY surveys the divided state of political opinion on what the government should provide for 'mental health'*

AT THE END of an interview with Renee Short last summer, I suggested to the veteran Labour MP that, in contrast with the Conservatives, British socialists have had little coherent vision about mental health policy over the last twenty years or so. 'Probably not', she replied, 'but it wasn't fashionable to talk about it then'.

1985 was the year in which mental health became a fashionable cause for the Left for the first time since the anti-psychiatry moment in the late sixties. I talked to Short soon after the publicaton of a report on community care from the all-party House of Commons Social Services Committee which she had chaired. After two years of investigation and 238 submissions from organisations and individuals working in mental health, the Committee criticised strongly the way the government was going about replacing mental hospitals by services in the community.

Such a report, the first of its kind, from such an authoritative source, made mental health a topical issue. In the first few months of last year, five television documentaries examined mental illness and mental health care. These programmes were followed by a series of meetings around the country, in Labour Party and Trade Union branches and pressure groups like the Socialist Health Association, the British Network of Alternatives to Psychiatry, local 'women and mental health' groups, to try and hammer out a radical policy on mental health. And at the Labour Party Conference in October, there were six submitted motions specifically on mental health and handicap.

But why all this interest? The closure of the mental hospitals is not a particularly new idea. It was implicit in the 1930 Mental Treatment Act, spelt out in the 1959 Mental Health Act and has had the support of all the major political parties since then. Not one hospital has, however, closed, due to the resistance from the psychiatric establishment.

The difference this time is that this resistance has crumbled. In 1984, the then Minister of Health, Kenneth Clarke, instructed the regional health authorities to draw up plans for the future of their psychiatric services including definite time-tables for closing many of their mental hospitals in favour of 'community care'. As the plans landed on his desk during 1985, all the indications were that the regions were anxious to conform to the Minister's wishes. In the next couple of years, the first mental hospitals will close. The problem for the Left is that it is still hopelessly divided on an alternative.

THERE ARE 157 mental hospitals in England and Wales and 203 psychiatric units in general hospitals which look after about 72,000 patients and take up about one third of all hospital beds. (Due to the virtual absence of community facilities like day care and crisis centres in Scotland and Northern Ireland, there is at present very little pressure to close the mental hospitals there.)

Most of these patients have presented psychotic or psychopathic symptoms — what lay people refer to as 'madness' — or are in grave danger of suicide. More than half have been in hospital for two years or



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## Arbours and depression

**George** is in his early thirties. Growing up in a working class family, with an ambitious mother, he went on to university and now works in the media.

In his mid twenties, he experienced the first of what were to become regular severe depressions: 'In the last seven years I've become depressed for no apparent reason at intervals of about a year. These periods of depression last about six months and then just go away and then I'm fine'.

Three years ago, for the first time, George went to see his GP who referred him to a psychiatrist at the local teaching hospital. He was given an appointment with the hospital psychotherapist, but by the time it arrived 'the depression was so bad, I didn't want to go'.

George was rescued by several friends who had heard of the Arbours Crisis Centre in North London. With the help of a social worker, he obtained a grant from the local social services to spend five weeks at Arbours which is run on psychotherapeutic methods.

'Since that time', he says, 'I've continued to see an Arbours psychotherapist once a week out of my own money. I've never taken any drugs for my depressions not simply out of principle but because part of my depression is not wanting to recover. Arbours helped me understand my depressions, to realise their value and learn to accept and contain them as part of myself.' ●

more, the 'long stays'. Current NHS expenditure on mental health in England and Wales is about £1 billion, over 90 per cent of which is spent on hospital psychiatric units and the mental hospitals, which mostly date from Victorian times. In some of the hospitals, 40 per cent of their budget is spent on simply propping up the building.

At the other end of the scale, GPs estimate that up to 50 per cent of people they see have mental rather than physical problems. And studies have suggested that, at any one time, one quarter of the population have psychiatric symptoms.

What we have then is a mental health system that offers hospital treatment for 'acute' patients suffering from, for example, a schizophrenic attack or a severe depression; that offers hospital care for 'chronic' patients who may be continually subject to such attacks; and underfunded community services — GPs, day centres, day hospitals, hostels — that deal with everything else that can be termed mental illness, from drug problems and 'behavioural disorders' to neuroses (depressions, phobias, obsessions etc.)

Few people deny that the concentration on hospitals is outdated and lopsided. But few also deny that closing the hospitals is an excellent opportunity for this government, under the guise of 'community care', to cut mental health spending. Under this agreement are some very divisive issues indeed.

The problems revolve around the nature of mental illness itself and what kind of services 'community care' should therefore offer. There is no dispassionate way of deciding the answer. There are vested interests, of job status and security, at stake; views on what mental illness is, and how it should be treated can have profound, though not conventional, political implications. At one end is the medical model which, at its extreme, sees mental illness as a product of biochemical disorders which drugs or electric shocks can correct. At the other is a psychoanalytic model which traces the development of illness through an individual's life experience, often seeking the origin in early childhood. Although psychoanalysis has produced a rich body of theoretical work, it has had little impact on official mental health policies although some of its ideas have been taken up by psychotherapy in a wide range of social welfare services.

THE MOST STRAIGHTFORWARD answer is put forward by COHSE, the main union, along with NUPE, organising in the psychiatric services and supported by most Labour MPs. COHSE argue that the central concern in restructuring the mental health system must be to safeguard current medical standards in the treatment and care of the seriously mentally ill, i.e. those who have need of the present hospital service. They accept what is termed a 'medical model' of mental illness and a hierarchy of treatment with consultants at the top.

Their argument is that the real aim of this government's desire to close the mental hospitals is to abandon present national medical standards and to reduce drastically state services for mental illness. Job losses, expecially among nurses and auxiliary workers, will follow. The burden on unpaid carers (i.e. women) will increase. And the result for the mentally ill will be much worse than the present hospital system.

Socialists, therefore, should prevent any mental hospital being closed until full community services, predominately provided by the *health* service, have been provided. This will demand a vast amount of extra money over the next ten years.

So COHSE members have been in the forefront of campaigns against some of the closures already announced: at Friern hospital in North London, in Lincoln, in Liverpool. Yet in health districts like Wakefield, Exeter and in Nottingham — where COHSE representatives were fully involved in drawing up the plans to close two mental hospitals — the union has given a cautious vote of approval.

Michael Meacher, a COHSE member and Labour spokesperson for Health and Social Services, agrees that 'the Tory plans are empty rhetoric (devised) to save public expenditure.' He wants experimental community schemes to work out the level of need which would form the basis of 10 year 'Health and Welfare Community Plans.' 'I'm sure we're talking of literally billions of pounds', he adds.

Not so, says Chris Heginbotham, a Labour Party member and Director of MIND, the mental health pressure group. Such an approach plays right back into the hands of the psychiatric establishment who have blocked any attempt to close the mental hospitals.

Heginbotham's view, which gets the support of many non-medical workers in mental health such as social workers, volunteers and therapists, is that the opportunity finally to close the hospitals

## Suicide and women

Thirteen years ago, **Jan** took an overdose. She was rushed to hospital for a stomach pump and then admitted to a mental hospital as a voluntary patient.

'My suicide attempt wasn't so much "a cry for help",' she now says, 'but more a "scream of rage". After a week in hospital, on valium and barbiturates, I tried to take another overdose but didn't have enough tablets. Then, in a 15 minute interview with the Consultant Psychiatrists, I was told that if I wouldn't accept ECT treatment, I would be discharged. I didn't want to go home so I consented, reluctantly'.

The effect of the ECT, according to Jan, was to 'disorientate me, to make me more likely to accept psychiatric advice and to act as a deterrent. It didn't get rid of the depression'. What did help was the interest of a junior psychiatrist and, 'perhaps' a treatment of anti-depressant drugs given after the ECT treatment. 'It was only when I came to London four years later and started going along to the Women's Therapy Centre that I began to cope with the feelings of helplessness'.

Jan attended a weekly group with one of the Centre's therapists for a year (which cost her £1 a week) and the group has since continued on a self-help basis. She also receives individual psychotherapy twice a week at a local Child Guidance Centre (where she went when she was anxious about one of her children). This therapy is on the NHS and is with a social worker.

Now 36, she reflects: 'I suppose there have been two things which enabled me to cope with my depressions; the therapies I've done over the last five years, and my involvement in the politics of mental health. As a working class woman, it's been very hard for me to get the right kind of help.' ●



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## Anti-psychiatry

Since 1951, **Henry** has had experience of 17 psychiatric hospitals and institutions. He's been variously diagnosed as 'suffering from acute anxiety states, psychopathic personality, schizoid and quite a few others'. And received virtually the entire range of treatments on offer: Insulin, ECT, major and minor tranquillisers, occupational, behavioural, group and individual psychotherapy.

He describes his experience of psychiatric treatments thus: 'The most harmful thing was being kept locked up in solitary confinement. Then ECT. I've had 20 ECTs although fortunately not all at once. As a result of being kept on the phenothiazines (major tranquillisers) for several years, I still suffer from Tardive Dyskinesia — muscle spasms — for which there is no cure. I was very fortunate in that I just missed out on receiving a leucotonomy in 1956. I was a voluntary patient and when the time came to shave my head for the operation, I refused. The psychiatrist was furious and said "I wish you were psychotic and I could do it against your will".'

Henry is as critical of the various forms of psychotherapy he's experienced: 'brainwashing and often the therapists I've seen are more screwed up than me'.

Now in his late fifties, Henry is unemployed 'reasonably happily so' and spends much of his time on voluntary work propagandising against the psychiatric establishment. He was a founder member of the Mental Patients Union in 1973, and then helped form PROMPT, a pressure group of mainly ex mental patients which has now changed its name to the Campaign Against Psychiatric Oppression.

He reflects: 'Mental illness, I think, is a symptom of a sick society and therapy must be aimed at helping the whole person to freedom not, as with psychiatry, to more oppression'. ●

and liberate the resources tied up in them for *all* those in need of mental help is too good to miss. The situation is still fluid enough for socialists to intervene. '*We* must start thinking up alternatives to the hospitals', he says, 'and go to the health adminstrators saying "we want to close hospitals as well, but this is how you're going to do it." We *don't* have to wait until we get more money before doing anything.' Heginbotham thinks that probably an extra £4-500 million per annum within five years is needed.

Now this view seems to differ from COHSE only in detail until we look at what kind of community services Heginbotham and COHSE supporters actually want. For implicit in Heginbotham's position is a model of mental illness that relegates medical treatment to a small part of total mental health care. Heginbotham's allies want to emphasize a 'psycho-social' model and develop community services like mental health centres and sheltered and crisis accommodation which are organised on a multi-disciplinary approach. The medics would simply provide one of the several specialist skills on offer, rather than dominating a hierarchy. What they want is an orientation of treatment away from drugs and physical treatments to the 'talking cures': psychoanalytic and family therapy. At present, it is extremely difficult to receive even once a week psychotherapy on the NHS outside the large teaching hospitals and there is very little psychotherapeutic 'crisis work' for those who do not want drugs.

Shula Ramon, an LSE lecturer who has written extensively on mental health policy, argues that the union are missing a golden opportunity: 'If they broke from the medical model and argued for a real community system which *has* to be more labour intensive, the main beneficiaries would be their members. The nurses and auxiliary workers would have a much more powerful role than at present.' But it would mean moving and retraining staff and the defensive, institutional power of the union would diminish.

NOW THIS ARGUMENT could run and run. But the difficulties for socialists don't stop there. For there are two more attitudes, each with respectable left pedigrees, to the present plans to close the mental hospitals.

One view, put forward by the late Marxist Peter Sedgewick in his book *Psychopolitics* (Pluto Press) and supported by many mental patients' families, is that the closure of the hospitals is not the real issue at all but an ideological diversion. What socialists should be doing is to become champions of 'good practices' irrespective of their institutional context.

Some hospitals clearly aren't worth saving because their conditions are appalling. But some, particularly the later ones like Napsbury in Hertfordshire, have kept high standards of nursing and therapeutic care. These should be maintained and others like it built.

Implicit in this view, which is a revised 'medical model', is that there are and will always be a small group of people, the chronically mentally ill, who will always need regular or continual access to some form of asylum. The great advantage of these asylums being hospitals is that publicly recognised medical care can be provided or argued for.

But another view differs radically from this (and was one of the main targets of Sedgewick's work). This is the 'anti-psychiatry' position put forward in the 1960s by psychiatrists like R.D. Laing, David Cooper and Joe Berke and supported today by many psychotherapists and social workers and ex-patient pressure groups. In a modified form the tradition is best represented by the Arbours Association which Berke founded.

The 'anti-psychiatrists' argue that the mental hospitals are like concentration camps: they must be abolished and the concepts of 'mental patient' and 'mental illness' abandoned. The distinctions between 'chronic' and 'acute', 'psychosis' and 'neurosis' are spurious and unhelpful. Unlike Chris Heginbotham, the supporters of this position want *no* room for any kind of medical model as this inevitably labels some forms of emotional distress as illness.

In place of the hospitals, the State should provide a network of community services for anyone in need of emotional help or suffering from emotional pain without classifying or diagnosing what kind of pain people are in. These services must have staff trained in caring and listening skills — not psychiatric experts — and who emphasise the various forms of psychotherapy rather than medicine. Their critics, however, argue that lay therapists are not trained to recognise, or deal with, severe mental illness or pain and thus the 'client' may not get the experienced help he or she urgently needs.

With four different positions on offer, it is little wonder that the Left is confused and split about the present plans to close the mental hospitals. It is a division that does not correspond to other splits on the Left. Much of the most interesting work in radical mental health care has been done by feminists who have experienced the psychiatric system and who have a more developed politics about key issues such as hierarchies, the family, nursing and health yet we are no nearer to an agreed feminist policy on closing the hospitals than a socialist one. There is little chance of a British equivalent to *Psychiatrica Democratica*, the progressive movement in Italy which made sure that the closure of Italian mental hospitals took place in a radical rather than a conservative context.

KENNETH CLARKE, in his time as Minister of Health, called all the cards. His successor, Barney Hayhoe, looks set to collect. In November, Hayhoe felt strong enough to disregard almost all of the 100 recommendations made by Renee Short's Committee. The previous month, the Labour Party Conference passed 'Composite 13' which called for a halt to the closures of mental hospitals until 'suitable provision' and a 'sufficiently high standard of care' is provided in the community, a testament to the greater influence of the unions than of mental health lobbies in the party.

Until this kind of fudge and woolliness is sorted out, mental health policy will remain one of the ironies of politics: an issue which has preoccupied some of the best thinkers on the Left but has been determined by conservative politicians. □



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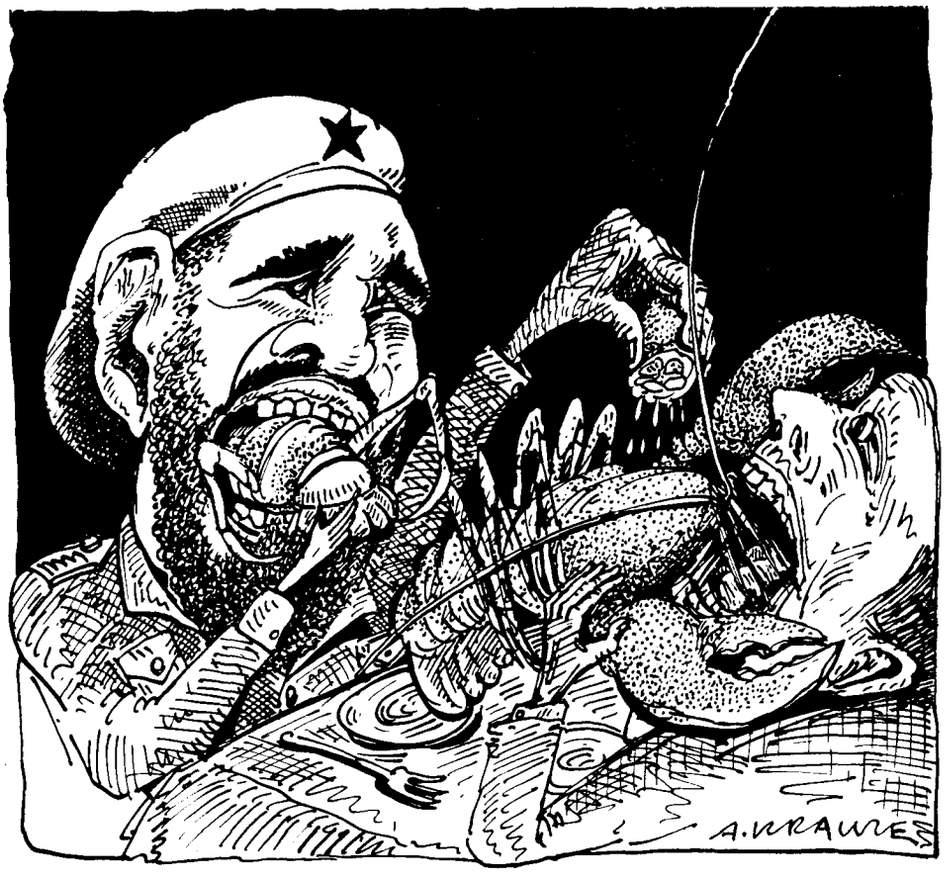


Andrzej Krauze

# Dinner-table diplomacy

Michael Leapman

**In the Eye of the Storm**
KURT WALDHEIM *Weidenfeld* £16.95

NEAR THE BEGINNING of this candid book of memoirs, the former Secretary General of the United Nations tells a touching little story about his childhood in 1930s Austria. On his way to school every day he passed a pastry shop.

'It became my daily ritual to stop and covet every cake, tart and pastry behind the glass. I was always hungry. Most Austrians were always hungry. One day, while I was making my imaginary selection, an old friend of my father's greeted me and after the usual exchange of courtesies invited me to choose any sweet I wished. My hesitation was short-lived, but the embarrassment of choice was such that I came away with several. I have remembered that treat all my life.'

The tale provides a useful metaphor for his ten years as the world's top bureaucrat. He had coveted the Secretary General's job; when he attained it, he found that the sweets of office resembled an Austrian cream cake — pleasurable enough but lacking substance and not always good for his health.

The most searing event of his tenure was a visit to Tehran over the New Year holiday of 1979-80 in an attempt to secure the release of the American hostages. Because Ayatollah Khomeini's administration had established no clear lines of authority, his safety could not be properly guaranteed. Jostled by hostile crowds and threatened by men with rifles, he lost his nerve and began asking himself whether it was really his job to take such risks.

The mission failed and it was more than a year before the hostages were released. Waldheim drew a discouraging conclusion from the experience, which he believes was partly responsible for his failure to be elected for a third term: 'Carrying the burden of an enormous political and moral responsibility, the Secretary General of the United Nations is faced with one simple truth: he has no executive power. His influence depends on his diplomatic skills and persuasiveness, when he can bring them to bear.'

That theme permeates the book, which is essentially a catalogue of well-intentioned failure. The Tehran adventure is one of a string of unsuccessful mediation efforts that he describes in all their frustrating detail. When he is not ranging the world trying to solve conflicts in Cyprus, Africa and the Middle East, he is back in New York juggling with words so that the Security Council can agree on resolutions so ambiguous as to mean different things to the quarrelling parties.

Always he comes up against the same intractable truth: that governments depend for their survival on the support they can attract at home — from the electorate in the case of democracies and from power centres in totalitarian regimes. It is much easier for leaders to rally that support by being seen to stand up vigorously for national priorities than by being talked into a compromise for the sake of international harmony.

Waldheim recognises this factor but places too much faith in the power of diplomacy to overcome it. The forging of companionable relations between world leaders over the brandy and after-dinner mints may be a pleasure for its own sake but it does not solve much, as the book confirms time and time again.

This essential weakness in Waldheim's concept of a world peacemaking authority is hinted at by the number of times food crops up in his narrative. Like many Austrians, he is an enthusiastic trencherman, and that initial cake story sets the scene for many other gastronomic encounters.

At one point he believed he might have solved the Cyprus crisis by giving the Greek and Turkish communal negotiators a good dinner at the Hotel Sacher in Vienna, followed by a visit to a bar. When that failed he tried the Wilson solution of beer and sandwiches. 'Denktash wolfed the lot. Makarios had a glass of orange juice.' After that unbalanced feast they drew up an outline agreement, but it was repudiated in the cold light of reality.

Sixteen pages later we find Waldheim's chief aide, Brian Urquhart, in Geneva, trying to settle the question of Namibia 'through informal receptions and a special train journey through the magnificent Swiss countryside. But there was no substantial change and the conference got nowhere'. At the 1981 north-south economic summit at Cancun, 'there were many bilateral talks in the surrounding offices and at the luncheons, dinners and social occasions, where careful organisation ensured that no group was ever the same twice'. But there too the event was 'long on harmonious generalities but short on practical results'.

The cook's tour continues in Cuba, where Fidel Castro tries to make our hero eat raw lobster garnished with lemon juice. 'I have frequently been willing to sacrifice my digestive system in the interest of international understanding, but this went beyond my normal bounds.' (Later he discovers that American friends prepare it in the same style and it is not so bad after all.) He is also a bit put out by the sheeps' eyes he is offered in Mauritania. Viennese coffee with Rosalynn Carter and fancy cakes with Golda Meir are the more acceptable face of gastric diplomacy.

Despite his long experience of socialising with the mighty, Waldheim still seems star-struck by the most glamorous figures on the international circuit. He is pathetically pleased when Henry Kissinger offers him a glowing tribute for his mediation efforts on Cyprus and the Middle East. And he is proud to have stood in as an interpreter for President Mitterrand at a luncheon for African heads of state: 'I did so gladly, although I left the table rather hungry.'

I expect he soon remedied that. And now, in a spirit of further self-sacrifice, he is putting his much-abused digestive system on the line again by running for President of Austria. Good luck to him, and *bon appétit*.



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# Lamentations

David Montrose

**Indian Country**
PETER MATTHIESSEN *Collins* £12.95

DURING THE 19th century, the time-honoured maltreatment of the American Indians — fuelled by greed and ethnocentric arrogance — reached a culmination in the cause of Manifest Destiny. With white expansionists demanding *Lebensraum*, the native peoples were subjected to land grabs, forcible relocation to reservations, military atrocities, broken treaties, swindles. Peter Matthiessen's fine book — like its even finer predecessor, *In The Spirit of Crazy Horse* (not published in Britain) — shows how this process has continued, less violently but no less inexorably, throughout the 20th century, with frontiersmen giving way to industrialists and bureaucrats. Matthiessen's sympathies are unequivocally with the growing number of Indians who seek to live in the traditional way on their traditional homelands. Drawing on history for background and perspective, he recounts those of their struggles he has witnessed across America over the past decade.

Central to 'Indian way' is traditional religion. While no longer forbidden — indeed, supposedly protected by law — it is nevertheless widely discouraged and disrupted. Such 'paganism' offends the many fundamentalist bureaucrats in the relevant government agencies and the acculturated Indians who effect their policies. More importantly, though, by regarding the land as sacred and inviolable, it runs directly counter to white materialism, which views as criminally wasted land whose resources remain unexploited. The natural wealth — notably uranium, coal and oil — of the Western reservations has long been the target of an alliance of big business and the agencies notionally charged with protecting Indian interests. For years, corporations have obtained outrageously cheap mineral leases by dealing with corrupt and unrepresentative 'tribal councils' — where traditionalists carry little weight — which are the stooges of a complaisant Bureau of Indian Affairs. This explains why, despite inhabiting one of the world's richest mining belts, the Navajo of the Southwest constitute America's poorest ethnic group, with the great majority living well below poverty level. (Tribal council members, however, live well above it.)

This officially-sanctioned chicanery is compounded by the disdain for safety and environmental considerations exhibited by the corporations, which include Kerr-McGee (best known for the Karen Silkwood case) and Union Carbide (of Bhopal notoriety). Many, in fact, flagrantly neglected to comply with assorted statutory requirements before commencing operations. But then, where Indian country is concerned, the US government has customarily overlooked its own laws whenever they conflict with commercial expedience. Here, the results include vast and unreclaimable strip-mined tracts, serious contamination from radioactive and toxic wastes, the depletion and pollution of scarce water supplies (in New Mexico, precious desert aquifers are even being systematically 'dewatered' to dry out uranium-bearing strata for more profitable mining). New Mexico also boasts the power plant whose shroud of polluted air was, in the Sixties, the only man-made phenomenon excepting the Great Wall of China visible to astronauts. Nowadays, it is merely one component of 'the largest energy-generating power grid in the world', which poisons the atmosphere of the USA's largest reservation. Similar irresponsibility, though on a smaller scale, has occurred thoughout Indian territory.

Fortunately, supported by environmentalist and other groups, the Indians have won some battles. In Northern California, they thwarted a Forest Service scheme to drive a road, for the benefit of the rapacious timber corporations, through sacred ground in the Siskiyou Mountains; in Nevada, their protests led to the state government vetoing a proposed MX missile complex on Shoshone land; in South Dakota, they induced several corporations to cease uranium exploration on the Black Hills reservations. Unfortunately, the would-be exploiters rarely give up, while the Indians' poverty can weaken their resolve to oppose further despoliation of their domains. But the worst thing is, no matter how strong their resistance, they have already lost far too much. □

# The uses of failure

Christian Wolmar

**What a Way to Run a Railroad: An Analysis of Radical Failure**
CHARLES LANDRY, DAVID MORLEY, RUSSELL SOUTHWOOD, PATRICK WRIGHT
*Comedia* £2.50

WE'RE ALL GUILTY of radical failure — well, those of us who try — so it's an excellent idea to try to discover why there is so much of it about. The silly title masks an important attempt to work out the reason for the demise of so many left organisations and groups.

Listing 80 radical groups which have folded, Landry and co. bemoan the absence of a healthy alternative network of left publications and organisations. The root of these failures is the rejection of conventional structures in favour of libertarian and idealistic ways of functioning which doom most groups to a premature death. Concentration on the means rather than the ends, lack of planning, a desire to shy away from wielding power and, most important, an emphasis on collective, non-hierarchical ways of working are all blamed.

There are large swathes of *Railroad* with which hardly anyone, except the few surviving head-in-the-sand ideologue libertarians, could disagree. Of course, there were many ill-judged attempts to do away with hierarchies and organisational straitjackets at a stroke when a softer, slower approach would have been more appropriate. There were, indeed, mistaken attempts to make collectives into perfect little socialist enclaves behind walls whose crumbling the members didn't notice until it was too late and the organisation succumbed to the cold winds of capitalism.

But then the years between the Beatles and the IMF were an exciting time when daring and innovation were applauded rather than criticised, when a radical change in society, even if it fell short of revolution, seemed possible, when there were victories to celebrate and when there was a burgeoning radical movement.

Landry *et al.* forget all that. Worse, they parody it. Yes, chaps, it is easier 'to move directors to take their turn making the tea and quite another expecting the typists to take their turn doing the cash-flow projections' but were we wrong to try? Because we tried, there are countless people — women, mainly — now doing cash-flow projections when otherwise they would never have got beyond the tea-urn. Just try visiting a few community centres, tenants' associations and women's groups where these conventions have been successfully challenged in a way that has radicalised people and changed their lives. Many of these people are refugees from hierarchies but Landry and co. seem to have talked only to the casualties of collectives.

And watch out boys, caricature is a double-edged weapon. Comedia, for which three of the four authors work, is controlled by an all-white male partnership. Their approach could quite easily be interpreted as 'nouveau misogyny', a response to the feminist critique of such organisations as Comedia and a measure of their failure actually to confront what women have been saying for the past 15 years — or the past 10,000 come to that. The hidden agenda of the book is a criticism of the feminist influence on radical culture, reinforced by the authors' lack of reference to the most successful venture to emerge from alternative culture — feminist publishing.

The saddest thing about the book is that it fails on its own terms. It is scrappily written, badly needs a good edit — maybe the four authors didn't know how to make collective decisions — and its structure is arbitrary. Worst of all, it offers few solutions, perhaps because the authors don't quite dare say what they really mean, and ends with a few disjointed suggestions and vague references to Gramsci and the GLC. While rejecting conventional management theory, they do not actually say what radical groups should be doing except to be thinking more systematically about ways of surviving in the capitalist world.

The gains of radical groups, however, cannot be measured simply in terms of survival. Their influence goes far beyond that and, in any case, even those that have failed have sometimes formed the roots of new organisations.

As an example of the book's sloppiness, Publications Distribution Co-operative for



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which two of the authors worked is astonishingly omitted from the list of failed radical groups at the beginning and *News Release*, the magazine of Release, and *ZIG*, the newsletter of the Zimbabwe Information Group, both of which were outlived by their parent organisations, are unaccountably included.

I agree entirely with the proposition that left groups need to establish proper management structures, work out their aims, set out their objectives, be prepared — within limits — to compromise at times on their politics to ensure their organisation's survival and to avoid sanctimonious 'right-on-ness'. But to write a book without any reference to the context of radical failure; without sufficient reference to the difficulties that oppositional groups are bound to have in a hostile society; without examining successful co-operatives and collectives to learn from them; and, finally, without defining success in broader terms than financial viability within a capitalist system, is a bad start to a series which, according to the jacket, 'aims to define effective ways of working that are congruent (*sic*) with democratic aspirations and principles'.

None of this, and I am not writing this pen in cheek, is to detract from the fact that *Railroad* is a valuable attempt to start a debate on the Left about organisational stucture and methodology. It is rather to rebuke the authors for pretending to put forward an ideologically neutral position when there is hardly a paragraph that does not have a sting in its tail or a section which doesn't imply, at least by omission, that hierarchies and hard-nosed capitalist decision-making processes are the solution. If you spend all your time redefining and realigning, you can, at times, forget where you started from. □

# All that glitters

Bill Greenwell

**Rainbow Roun Mah Shoulder**
LINDA BROWN BRAGG *Carolina Wren* £4.95
**Kahawa**
DONALD E. WESTLAKE *Allison & Busby* £9.95
**The Boys From Bonnymuir**
TOM LANNON *Albyn Press* £5.95
**Under The Cover of a Hat and Green-Sealed Message**
H. C. ARTMANN translated by Derk Wynand *Quartet* £6.95
**Castle Gripsholm**
KURT TUCHOLSKY translated by Michael Hofmann *Chatto* £8.95

THESE FIVE BOOKS came armed with declamatory blurbs, effusive citations, tremendous claims to greatness, truth, genius etc. etc. It was intimidating, particularly since they struck me as an especially motley lot.

Linda Brown Bragg won $500 and publication in 1983 with her first novel **Rainbow Roun Mah Shoulder**, adjudged the best book by a North Carolina minority writer. If we believe judge Jerry Ward Jr., it *links the ineluctable power of lyric prose with sustained exploration of woman's consciousness in the 20th century*. This stupendously embarrassing statement considerably exaggerates the quality of a confusing narrative, one which hop-skips 40 years in its central figure's life. She is called Rebecca Florice or, rather, sometimes Rebecca, sometimes Florice: I haven't figured why. Hers is a suffering existence, in which relationships remain forever unstable, in which her faith and her love for a married preacher come into conflict, in which her craving for motherhood is frustrated and in which her colour ensures perpetual insecurity. Bragg's intention is, I think, to present a finally indomitable spirit, but we are distanced from Rebecca/Florice by the quick flit of the years and by a style which shifts gear too frequently. Colloquial and poetic passages mix uneasily with direct and open narrative. And the poetic prose is unsatisfactorily violet:

> The speech . . . rose and fell like white caps in the ocean. The tingling music of Southern softness, the drawn out second syllable of laughter fell on the black cushion of female presence, rich in browns and punctuated with fertile smiles.

The blurb for Donald E. Westlake's **Kahawa**, quoting the *New York Times*, is impossibly bossy: *If you don't like Kahawa, there's something wrong with you*. And it looks like I'm deficient. *Kahawa* is a reasonable thriller, but its only clever idea is to set the action in Amin's Uganda. Imagine the advantages: new scenery, those heads he kept in the fridge, the brutal horrors of the 'State Research Department', all those wives and concubines, the kilts, the coffee-smuggling . . . But adopting unfamiliar territory for your skulduggery is no substitute for plotting and *Kahawa* is as corny as they come. It abounds in miraculous escapes and the much-trumpeted 'spiral of double-dealing' is little more than a couple of flimsy twists. The narrative is pacy, the sentences simple and clean; there's a particularly good sequence involving the disposal of a captured train; I bet they're already casting the film; absolutely nothing is learned about Amin; the obligatory dirty bit (isn't *rectum* a silly word?) is on pp. 111-113.

'Idi Amin, unfortunately, is real', concludes Westlake, almost as if he may have misled us. Tom Lannon's **The Boys from Bonnymuir** is also based on actual events (*strongly based on facts* is the odd expression), but much more precisely. The story reconstructs how, in a singular abuse of law, two radical Scots were publicly executed in Glasgow in 1820, at a time when only 22 people in the city had the vote. A rising was quashed by one of the oldest and nastiest tricks. Two of its instigators were whipping the rebellion up *for* the authorities, to whom potential agitators would thus become more visible. Such historical forays are always worthwhile and encourage readers to turn to other accounts. But the novel, I'm afraid, is undistinguished, relying too heavily on dialogue, thin on characterisation. It left me with a definite sense of being in the wrong genre: it's a strong play which wants actors.

Artmann's two pieces – *two dazzling prose works by one of Austria's greatest twentieth century poets* – are lovingly translated by Derk Wynand. But they represent for me the worst sort of surrealism: the impenetrable sort. Artmann tries an old trick, *viz.* explain you're impenetrable, so they can't touch you for it. **Under the Cover of a Hat** (1974) begins, 'These people approach and speak in a language that no-one else can understand', and **Green-Sealed Message** (1967), a sequence of 90 equally unengrossing dreams, concludes 'You have never dreamed what I dreamed, and I never dream what you dream, and you will never dream what I will dream, for I dream my dreams and you dream yours.' It's a deal. I know that obscurity often reveals only the reader's ignorance and I'm prepared to be handed the pointy hat with the D, but I should have expected more assistance from Artmann's proselyte, Derk Wynand.

This assistance I receive from Kurt Tucholsky's translator, Michael Hofmann, whose introduction to **Castle Gripsholm** is valuable about writer and work (this was his last novel, written in 1931, four years before his 1935 suicide. Yet the blurb has the *black clouds of World War II loom over Berlin*. How far can clouds *loom*?). It's an odd, tantalising novel, a tale of a young writer and his friend and lover on a summer holiday in Sweden. The Swedish setting arises from Tucholsky's exile from Nazi Germany – in Sweden. And it's plain that Kurt is a light-headed version of the author. Inevitably the events are subtly very political indeed, but this really isn't apparent. The tale ambles and saunters, idly having Kurt and his Princess encounter a child maltreated by a local institution, whose brutal head, Frau Adriani, runs a régime compared unfavourably with that of the local madhouse. They resolve to rescue her. Alas, these images of totalitarianism are just *too* deceptively presented. *Castle Gripsholm* flutters along too gently for its purpose and, despite Hofmann's championing of the novel, I found it mainly monotonous, finally unsuccessful. □

# G I brides

Paul May

Daisy, Violet, Rose,
Washing day below deck,
Girls and linen in public.

Evening falls behind them,
With the pebbles falling in London,
The crumbs everywhere.

With little room in the ship,
It takes two to fold a letter.

The ship lives in celluloid
Which curls at the furthest end,
The rim of America,

Where upholstered men
Wait in twelve o'clock shadows,
For Daisy, Violet, Rose.



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# Shorter reviews

### Witness to War: An American Doctor in El Salvador

CHARLES CLEMENTS MD *Fontana* £2.95

Dr Charles Clements is no common family physician. A pilot in Vietnam, the depersonalised horrors of that air war propelled him through a breakdown and divorce into medical school and the Quakers. By then his government was again intent on the vicarious destruction of a peasantry, only this time far closer to home, in El Salvador. Clements decided that he must redress the balance as he could. After six months' negotiation with highly suspicious rebels, he found himself on the 'Guazapa front', the only trained doctor for 10,000 people subjected to napalm and phosphorus, 'search and destroy' sweeps and constant fear. Told with astonishing quiet modesty, this is a truly fearful story of patching up half-incinerated children, performing amputations with a Swiss army knife, his best cure for anaemia a handful of deliberately rusted nails in a jar. Unshaven and virtually unequipped, he can see from the mountains the trim San Salvador hotels where the international press stay and from where the Red Cross come in Landrovers to collect prisoners — there is no exchange; the government troops take no prisoners. Always he is torn between an urgent clinging to his pacifist medical neutrality and impassioned rage as the US-supplied bombers blow the populous hillsides apart.

American foreign policy activists face daily humiliations and challenges from their own Government's activities abroad that their British counterparts almost never experience. Since returning from El Salvador, Clements has for two years doggedly tramped the lecture circuits with his story, while organising *Americans for Peace in the Americas*. Meanwhile, in the 'backyard', things get worse by the hour. There are few civilians left in Guazapa today. The Salvadoran military now regard one-third of their own country as a free-fire zone and, with barely a squeak from the rest of us, the fiercest aerial bombardment ever seen in the West is making the countryside uninhabitable.

**Jo Hugh-Jones**

### Black Book On The Welsh Theatre

DEDWYDD JONES *Iolo* £7.95

In her preface to this book Jan Morris suggests that the two legitimate purposes of Welsh national theatre are to encourage the vitality of indigenous culture and to present to Welsh people plays of the highest international standard. Laudable objectives indeed, but they have not been achieved in Wales.

To explain how this failure has occurred the author charts the history of Welsh drama since the early 20th century, and what a sorry tale of 'monopoly, amateurism, waste and bigotry' it is. It is a good illustration of the effects of giving power to a few people in a small country.

Mr Jones argues cogently that the chief cause of the problems of Welsh drama now is the Welsh Arts Council. It is the only grant-giving body of its kind in the country, but it is not publicly accountable, it operates in secret, its members are nominated and it appears to have no coherent policies. There are good grounds for supporting the author's view that it has become a machine dedicated to perpetuating its own power and glory.

Over the past two decades it has appointed non-Welsh directors to nearly all the major theatres. Michael Geliot, Geoffrey Axworthy, Roger Tomlinson, George Roman, Toby Robertson — no humble locally grown Joneses or Evanses here. Lacking knowledge of the culture this all-male cast has steadfastly staged a dolly mixture of West End hits, A-level material and safe international standards.

In fact, Wales does have its own playwrights — Caradoc Evans, Dylan Thomas, J.O. Francis, Dannie Abse, to name but a few. In 1981 155 plays were submitted to the Play For Wales Competition, but not one was fully produced with Welsh Arts Council money. Welsh playwrights are the untouchables of Welsh theatre. You see, they might write plays about monopoly, corruption, hypocrisy and philistinism. And they might even undermine the status of the non-Welsh directors.

Mr Jones has succumbed to his angry feelings by shouting 'on top note' and repeating himself for 138 pages. His intemperate language and bitter irony may not appeal to English readers accustomed to understatement and gentle-toned reasoning.

**Diana Whitley Jones**

### Selected Speeches and Interviews

JANOS KADAR *Pergamon Press* £15

There are two things which make this work stand out in relation to its companion volumes in Pergamon Press's (or is it Robert Maxwell's?) series of adulations to world leaders.

Firstly, Hungary's Janos Kadar is not a stereotypical Eastern European political leader. Relatively shy of publicity and lacking in theoretical pretensions, Kadar, a former typewriter mechanic, has managed to retain an element of the common touch as exemplified by his constant use in speeches of anecdote and practical examples. His speeches, therefore, are refreshingly easy to read.

More importantly, Kadar has steered Hungary along a unique path of non-dogmatic reform over the past 20 years. These speeches clearly indicate the open-handed atmosphere of modern Hungary.

Secondly, the first 150 pages of this book consist of an autobiographical sketch of Kadar by contemporary Hungarian writer Laszlo Gyurko. This first appeared in Hungary two years ago, published as a separate book.

The value of Gyurko's work lies in the insight it gives the Western reader into how far official Hungary has gone in its criticisms of past excesses. Gyurko pulls no punches when describing the iniquities of Hungarian Stalinism, show trials or forced collectivisation.

We are given plenty of information about Kadar's early life and about his current reflections. But there are gaps and we are left in virtual ignorance about several aspects of his enigmatic career. Most notable is the failure to explain how one day Kadar could be publicly referring to the events of '56 as a 'glorious uprising . . . permeated with true patriotism and with loyalty to socialism' and then almost the very next be describing them as a 'counter-revolution'.

In short, then, we are given only a sympathetic biography of Kadar. There is nothing essentially wrong with a sympathetic political biography, though the best ones are usually tempered with critical appreciation. Perhaps it's too early, even in Hungary, for such a biography to be officially published in Eastern Europe.

**Bob Dent**

### Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism

K. STEPHEN VINCENT *Oxford* £40

Proudhon is best known for his phrase, 'Property is theft', which will be reinforced by this book — not so much through its content as through its cost. The volume contains 320 pages, the text itself consisting of only 220 pages, with no illustrations or other justification for the extraordinary price, which will put it out of the reach of all but the rich and the dishonest. Anyway, it seems to be unavailable a few months after publication. All this is a pity, because the book is worth reading.

K. Steven Vincent is the latest in a line of American academics who have offered rather abstract analyses of Proudhon's ideas — Alan Ritter (1969), Constance Margaret Hall (1971), Robert Hoffman (1972) — his special contribution being an attempt in general to re-establish him as a significant founder of French socialism and in particular to defend him against Marxist criticism. Within a roughly biographical framework the first half of the book describes Proudhon's development from Christian to anti-Christian socialism, and the second half describes his doctrines of associationism, mutualism and federalism, the whole emphasising the consistency of his moral and political thought and activity.

The result is interesting but irritating. Vincent tries to resolve some of the confusions and contradictions in Proudhon's difficult writings, and he certainly helps to restore some of his reputation, but he is unreliable in small matters and unconvincing in large ones. His focus is very narrow, including only French politics, and the main value of his work is also rather narrow, involving the refutation of Marx's attacks on Proudhon. The best general account of Proudhon's ideas in English is still Hoffman's *Revolutionary Justice*. British writers have taken a less academic approach, and ordinary readers may prefer the biographies by George Woodcock (1956) and Edward Hyams (1979) or the anthology of *Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon* by Stewart Edwards (1969). What would be most welcome would be a proper edition of Proudhon in English.

**Nicolas Walter**

### New Sounds, New Personalities: British Composers of the 1980s

PAUL GRIFFITHS *Faber* £5.95

In 1963 Murray Schafter produced *British Composers in Interview*, a useful and informative collection of interviews with the great and good of British music at the time. The two young Turks of that book were Alexander Goehr and Peter Maxwell Davies, and together with Harrison Birtwistle they are now the senior figures in Paul Griffiths's encounters with the younger generation. Probably 15 of Griffiths's 20 composers chose themselves; the others are more contentious, and Hugh Wood, David Blake, Anthony Payne and Michael Finnissy are conspicuous absentees.

The interviews are variably informative. Each is prefaced by a brief *mise-en-scène* in which Griffiths gives the circumstances of the interview, and these are often more revealing than the conversations proper. Getting to grips with Harrison Birtwistle is likened to 'trying to mate pandas'; Brian Ferneyhough was apparently tackled entirely by letter which gives too free a rein to his unreadable prolixity; Dominic Muldowney is caught on the defensive. The successes are predictable, as is much of the information the collection retails. Perhaps, though, too many composers were finally included; perhaps the book is too short. For whatever reason Griffiths seems to have had little success in drawing the composers out, luring them into revealing a bit more of themselves than a standard biographical portrait might contain; he is perhaps just a little too respectful. For anyone wanting a feel of what is happening in British music in the 1980s, the book is accurately pitched; those who want to dig any deeper will toil in vain.

**Andrew Clements**



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**FILMS**

# Bull in a china shop

John Coleman

**Year of the Dragon** (18)
*Warner; ABC, Fulham Road*
**A Chorus Line** (PG)
*Odeon, Leicester Square*
**Peppermint Freedom** (PG)
*Metro 1*
**Orion's Belt** (15)
*Cannons, Chelsea and Tottenham Court Road*

CONTROVERSY not only dogs Michael Cimino: it even cocks a leg at him. *The Deer Hunter* stirred up some critical in-fighting over here, at least, and *Heaven's Gate* proved less than heaven-sent in its tangled, bankrupting fate.

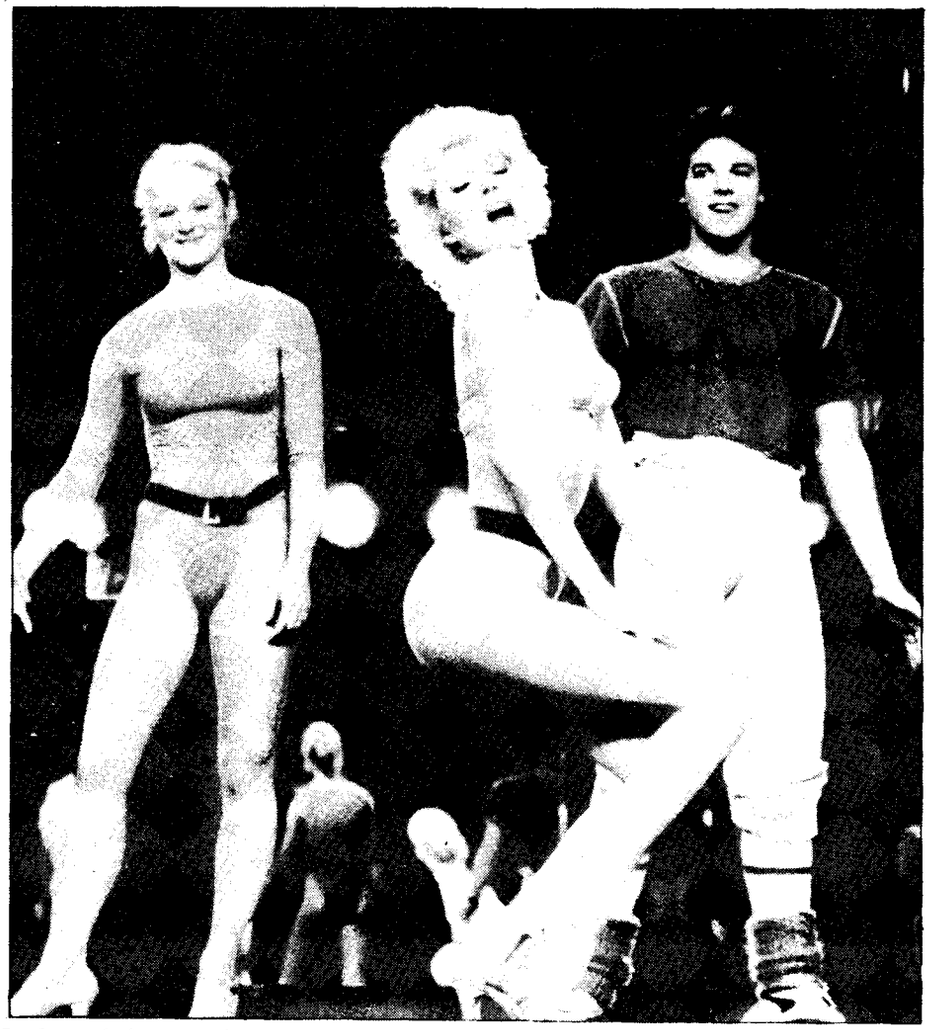
In the first we had De Niro as superman in Saigon, returned to whisk out a soldier buddy damn near single-handed. The second afforded a few stunning set-pieces of great extravagance and beauty, presumably where a lot of all that money went. Now comes **Year of the Dragon**, which has provoked Stateside press rebukes for racism as well as country-wide demos outside cinemas. What Gerrard Street and parts adjoining will make of it is anyone's guess. Certainly this headlong, violent thriller incorporates the least appealing and most flamboyant elements of Cimino's previous two films as a slobbish but incorruptible police captain, Stanley (Mickey Rourke), takes on the drug-racketeering might of New York's corrupt Chinatown. Exceeding his brief — to clean up a gang of murderous 'kids' who have killed Chinatown's unofficial 'Mayor' and are moving into the protection game — because he suspects these young assassins are working for the new boss Joey Tai (John Lone), Stanley is hampered by his superiors and finally taken off the job, when he Goes It Alone.

Or nearly. Tall, attractive Tracy Tzu (Ariane), a TV reporter with an apartment of screaming split-level elegance, is brutally wooed and won by boorish Stanley, who thereby betrays a long-suffering wife *and* his Vietnam-fostered hatred of Asians. She and a bespectacled rookie cop of Chinese extraction — ruthlessly infiltrated into the Triad's underworld — help out: Tracy gets gang-raped and the cop shot, but Stanley (missus meanwhile conveniently garotted) ends by seeing off wicked Joey and embracing an amazingly untraumatised Tracy in the last reel. All this happens against great décor and locales: jostling New Year processions, a shoot-out in a luxurious Mott Street restaurant, Joey's trip to a heroin-warlord's domain in Burma (where he dumps a bad woman's severed head on his plate to hasten negotiations) and that fashion-mag penthouse apartment, where Cimino's instinct for the classy image produces some posed love-making that tumbles into the ludicrous. Elsewhere this is a very brutal, muddled occasion with Rourke's Polish-American 'hero' much berated for his crudity by several of the characters, himself admitting 'I feel like such an asshole', coming across as a detestable asshole indeed throughout. One doubts if the effect was intended.

Not having seen **A Chorus Line** on stage (and I have not) may prove beneficial to one's enjoyment of Richard Attenborough's brave and vivid screening of it. This is a musical about what precedes mounting a musical: the auditioning and painful whittling down of queues of Broadway hopefuls, till 17 are left, and then the required blissful nine. Michael Douglas is well cast as Zach, the director-choreographer who harshly barks orders and intimate questions from his seat in the stall, his job complicated by the re-appearance of an old flame, Cassie (Alyson Reed), desperate for work. One of the flaws here is the introduction of a few flashbacks of them together before she struck out for Hollywood, trusting he would miss her. Apart from these, opening aerial shots of New York's skyscrapers, glimpses of thronged 'gypsies' outside the theatre and of Cassie cab-bound towards it, Attenborough has sensibly stuck to the show's essential premise: all the world's a stage, with mirrors at the back. And Zach's surely preposterous Method-in-madness probing of the aspirants becomes acceptable as a device for getting to know them a bit, an excuse for some crackling dialogue.

A smiling fellow presents himself as 'bizarre', so useless at school his pa pretended he had polio. 'On Father's Day I used to limp for him.' Suicide? 'I realised in Buffalo it was redundant.' Sheila (marvellous Vicki Frederick), verging on 30, wisecracks like a whip. A Puerto Rican woman quit acting school, unable to impersonate a bobsled or icecream. A bouncy Jewish gay announces race and sexual preference merrily. A kid relates his parents' reactions to him as a drag artist. More confessions, and most of them lead naturally into songs or dances or both. Audrey Landers's 'Tits and Ass' number nearly brought the house down — in a cinema.

'What's he want?' asks an anxious queue-er. 'Baryshnikov,' snarls a reject. And, of course, the dance routines — building from instant rehearsal or on-the-spot solos in their own right, choreographed by Jeffrey Hornaday — *are* heart-liftingly good; varied, acrobatic, drilled to the inch. A sucker for the musical, my preferred American genre, I set aside my notebook and just blinked: music by Marvin Hamlisch, lyrics by Edward Kleban, with a sensational new number, 'Surprise', that re-defined exuberance. P.S. There is one act of cruelty by Zach, preserved from the stage show, that seems a clumsily gratuitous gesture towards the despair that lies behind the razzmatazz. *That* point has been made long before. P.P.S. Not so surprising that



**Look, no chair: young hopeful gives her all for a part in the *Chorus Line***



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## Recommended viewing

*A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds*

**Defence of the Realm** Fumes of menace rise from David Drury's corrosive if erratic political chiller, written by Martin Stellman, reflecting current home-based concerns. Hoodwinked into disgracing awkward MP, tabloid reporter redemptively opens can of worms as Special Branch hovers (Gabriel Byrne, Denholm Elliott, Greta Scacchi).

**My Beautiful Laundrette** Low-budget, high-jinking mix of racism, gay love and Thatcherite ethics in today's Britain. Hanif Kureishi wittily scripts and Stephen Frears warmly directs ironic, tangled tale of South London Pakistani lad and ex-NF boyfriend managing title business for Saeed Jaffrey's superb, rascally rich uncle.

**Nineteen Nineteen** Hugh Brody's subtle, low-key first feature, magnificently played, mounted and edited: brief encounter in 1970 Vienna of ageing ex-patients of Freud — resident White Russian émigré Paul Scofield and naturalised New Yorker Maria Schell — for thorny, maybe therapeutic survivors' duologue deftly conjuring with Time and History.

Attenborough could empathise with his performers when one recalls the sole bright spot in dismal *Dr Dolittle*, his demonic caper-cutting as Blossom, the circus-owner: 'I've Never Seen Anything Like It'.

Too briefly: from West Germany, Marianne S.W. Rosenbaum's first feature, **Peppermint Freedom**, a fresh and part-surrealist look at life in the American Zone seen mostly through the eyes of a bewildered little village girl; and Ola Solum's decent Cold War thriller, **Orion's Belt**, where a freebooting Norwegian sailor stumbles on a clandestine Russian listening station and is a marked man from then on. □

## Harvests

Paul May

Dolly missed the wars,
The speeches in the big barn.
She knew that the boys had left
And been replaced each October
By young men from the city
Who came to howk the tattie trenches.

Other women took them in,
Scrubbed their skins
And carved out their eyes.
The broken horse took advantage,
Stamped like a senator,
Stood and gassed in the wintering fields.

She joined the other women on the shore
And saw the stars and moon
Beaten like steel into the surface of the sea,
And the men on the sand
Stumble up to the treasury
With their shell chests.

**Andy Goldsworthy's 'Snowball in Trees', Bentham, Lancashire, Feb 1980**

**ART**

# Breath of fresh air

Mo Dodson

*Freed from the gallery, art becomes prey to triviality, but a young 'outdoor' artist is busy challenging this rule*

ANDY GOLDSWORTHY's work succeeds because, among other things, it never forgets its humble origins in the common-or-garden impulse to 'doodle' with the natural environment. In the same way that most of us erect snowmen in our gardens or on our local commons, he builds his ephemeral pieces in open, green spaces near to wherever he happens to be living, using only the indigenous organic and geological materials that are within carrying distance of the art site. Most of his work melts, decays or erodes very quickly indeed, so Goldsworthy usually makes a photographic record — often, interestingly, of the process of decomposition itself.

Many of the objects he creates are humorously generalised representations of real natural forms: a huge snow-snake curling up a grassy slope; sand carved into the shapes of water-eroded stone; stalks of grass built up into delicate caricatures of crystalline structures. Other pieces are more abstract, more obviously human-made marks traced onto the natural environment: stones balanced precariously, rising into little architectural follies; slabs of pond ice stacked elegantly to form an arch in the middle of a grassy field.

Both the naturalistic and the abstract pieces, therefore, have a playful, unpretentious quality that is firmly based in what might be called our 'common culture'. We do not need to be familiar with Modern or Post-Modernist art to understand Goldsworthy's work. The wit of precariously balanced rocks, the 'design aesthetics' of natural forms and colours imaginatively manipulated, the humour of good-natured caricature, the clever use of available materials — all of these qualities in his work are clearly apparent, I think, to a wide range of people 'untrained' in the interpretation of avant-garde art.

But his works are not just funny, clever and pretty 'out-door doodles'. Their most important effect is to communicate to the onlooker a very precisely focused sense of



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place — they record one human being's acute and tactful appreciation of a particular micro-environment. It is true that this appreciation is expressed by a human intervention, a deliberate interruption of the 'seamless continuity' of nature. But this interruption is itself strongly reflective of the qualities of the natural environment, both in subject (iconography) and in materials and techniques.

Unlike the ponderous metaphysics of Richard Long's earthworks, or the megalomania of Christo's temporary obliterations of huge areas of the environment with plastic sheeting, Andy Goldsworthy's work enhances the existing qualities of a particular environment. His pieces sharpen our awareness of visual, tactile, structural, even ecosystemic relationships without damaging the local ecology.

Although this rather laboured analysis may seem out of tune with Goldsworthy's lightness of touch, it is important to distinguish his work from some of the better-publicised avant-garde movements of the last 25 years that bear a superficial resemblance to Goldsworthy's practice — movements such as Land Art, Minimalism, Conceptual Art and Community Art. Goldsworthy's work does something that these movements have tried, but failed, to do — it takes art out of the gallery framework, back to 'ordinary' people, without trivialising itself in the process. In spite of its modest intentions and scale, Goldsworthy's work represents a remarkable achievement and a potential point of growth.

An exhibition of photographs of the works will be on at the London Ecology Centre, 45 Shelton Street, London WC2, until 29 January. If you live within travelling distance of London, I recommend a visit to observe Andy Goldsworthy in action — he will be working on London's green spaces until 25 January and welcomes a live audience. Ring the Artangel Trust (01-351 9164) in the morning to find out where he will be working on any particular day. □

## THEATRE

# Mything

Benedict Nightingale

*Lust, patricide, incest: the forces which shape our fairy tales are fast disappearing from the pantos that share their titles*

SOMEWHERE IN the early-morning mists of my memory there's a dragon. He's growling, swishing his tail, threatening to trundle across the footlights and devour me and the other children and, before he can do so, succumbing with an awful howl to the saving blade of St George.

I don't know who he actually was — some sad old toper, maybe, hamming away his last days in the bleak English provinces — but the impression he left on my infant mind may well explain the quite unreasonable fascination the theatre has held for me ever since. In fact, his mad red eyes probably made me a critic. But where, I wondered as I went decorously about my professional business this cold yuletide, were his counterparts and descendants today? Or mine, for that matter?

One has learned over the years not to expect much terror or wonder in the commercial theatre. Cruel and baleful Captain Hooks aren't usually to be seen on and around Shaftesbury Avenue, nor an especially daunting stepmother at the London Palladium when *Cinderella* is on the boards, as it purports to be this year. Indeed, it seems naive to point out what these characters actually represent: the paternal principle at its most menacing; the maternal at its chillest and most rejecting. In the battle between myth, archetype and the debased traditions of the English panto there can be only one winner — can't there?

Yet hope springs eternal, or at least seasonal, when one takes trips away from the West End fleshpots. Think of the content of *Hansel and Gretel* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*, both of which are to be found at reputable addresses this year. A witch entices two children into her eyrie, fattens the boy until he's ready for eating, then is shoved by his sister into the oven she's heated and dies hideously. A vengeful giant pursues an adolescent down the longest phallic symbol in human fiction, only to crash and perish, thanks to youthful


# Theatre

**HALF MOON THEATRE** 213 Mile End Rd, London E1. 01-790 4000. **DRACULA** by Chris Bond, eves 7.30pm. *'A dazzling blend of hoary Hammer Horror and panto slapstick'* — Time Out. Ends Sat.

**BLOOMSBURY THEATRE** 01-387 9629 *until 11 Jan, 11am & 2.30pm* **THE GINGERBREAD MAN**. Until 11 Jan, 8pm **THE MILLIES** in **COVER GIRLS** (Fatter than ever). 18 Jan 8pm **THE DANCE BAND**.

# Music

**10 January**, 7.45pm Alan Bush **85th BIRTHDAY CONCERT**, Queen Elizabeth Hall. Medici String Quartet, Philip Langridge, London Sinfonietta Chorus. Programme includes: **Dialectic, Piano Quintet**. Tickets 01-928 3191. Management: Sinfonietta Productions.

BILLBOARD

# Theatre

**ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY** 01-628 8795/638 8891 24 hr info 01-628 2295.

**BARBICAN THEATRE 'As You Like It'** in repertoire with **'Othello'** and **'The Merry Wives of Windsor'** (from 23 Jan).

**THE PIT 'Melons'** a new play by Bernard Pomerance. *'Extraordinary story . . . Ben Kingsley — a superb performance'* F.T.

**NATIONAL THEATRE** 01-928 2252. Olivier (open stage) THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND/THE CRITIC, A CHORUS OF DISAPPROVAL. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) MRS WARREN'S PROFESSION, LOVE FOR LOVE, THE DUCHESS OF MALFI. Cottesloe (small auditorium) HAMLET, THE CHERRY ORCHARD, DOWN CEMETERY ROAD — THE LANDSCAPE OF PHILIP LARKIN. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

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resourcefulness and resilience. Both tales describe the conquest of threats and dreads that have dogged the race since it crawled out of the oceans, or at least climbed down from the trees. Even **Beauty and the Beast** — less grim, or Grimm, though in some ways it seems — is about confronting and overcoming a fear of sex that everyone not terminally insensitive will have felt. It's about accepting the unruly 'beast' in others, and maybe in ourselves too.

Not that you'd know it from Louise Page's adaptation at the Old Vic. This isn't because she's given Madame de Villeneuve's tale of the sweet innocent who resists the blandishments of the hairy monster who has inveigled her from her father, only to see him transformed into a handsome prince once she's agreed to marry him, either the modern slant one had half-expected or the fun treatment one had half-feared. Her accretions, mainly sprites good and bad, don't seem out of place in a fairy-story. The trouble turns out to be a plodding, wordy script — the sort that substitutes 'preciseness' for 'precision' and 'the lack of my children can overwhelm me to the brink of tears' for 'I miss my kids so much I could cry' — combined with a plodding and sometimes confusing production. The apology tucked into the programme, warning us that Veronica Quilligan (scheduled to play something called Zephyr) wouldn't be flying that night, might have been made for the evening as a whole, which came sans brio, sans magic, sans anything resembling lift-off.

A pity, because this could have been an important piece, attempting as it did to rescue Christmas entertainment from conventional silliness. Don't get me wrong here. It's reform rather than revolution I'm advocating. I don't altogether mind being forced by men in wellies and braces to shout 'hello', then made to join in 'I'm Coming Round the Mountain'. I don't vastly mind yelling 'yes' three times in succession to a dwarf who obscurely wanted to know if I and my fellow-spectators had measles. I don't mind a giant chicken scrambling through the audience and over my knees, or even being jovially twitted by a pantomime dame called 'Widow Robinson'. All that and more happened at **Jack and the Beanstalk**, and some of it I actually managed to enjoy, since it was done with such unaffected good humour. But there should always be the odd moment when, without irreversibly traumatising the littlest ones, children and adults alike are given the chance to sense why those old, old stories can still make the spine ice up and the subconsciousness quake, even in an era that flatters itself on its reason.

Actually, *Jack* at the Shaw comes nearer to achieving that than **Hansel and Gretel** at Stratford East. Its unseen giant does at least have a big, loud voice as well as big, loud socks for his slaves comically to drape over the washing line. But the witch at Stratford is so tame that the tot beside me, who had been reduced to tears by the two unfunnily funny spivs inexplicably capering through the forest, gurgled quite happily at her cacklings and withered cavortings. There are, incidentally, hints here of some socio-political edge, as there are in *Jack*: a good fairy in khaki, proclaiming herself a 'freedom fighter', and a bad princess with a spoiled-Sloane accent; a couple of genteel rent-sharks in pink suburban dresses at the Shaw. But that too disappears in an unending trickle of puns, foolish jokes and vaguely inane happenings.

Still, the fatuity of this is slight beside that of **Dracula**, which has roughly the same point and purpose as a gaudy billboard reading 'please throw stones at this notice'. Pretty well everyone at the Lyric, Hammersmith, is interested only in sending up a story which, though of more recent origin than the others on my visiting-list, has demonstrated its power to hold and haunt. That means that the fell Vlad, himself reduced to a Noel Coward lounge-lizard by Tim Flavin, makes his more murderous sorties in the company of burlesque 1920s lovelies, who flounce and bop and peppily charleston. It might be bearable if that and the rest of Charles McKeown's revisionism actually managed to be funny; but it doesn't, it isn't.

It all left me sympathising with the protagonist of Steven Berkoff's **Harry's Christmas**, who ends up killing himself in impotent despair at his emotional isolation. That dour entertainment, first half of a seasonal double-bill at the Warehouse, is a good corrective to the bouncing trivialities elsewhere. But Berkoff's delivery of the next monologue, Poe's **Tell-Tale Heart**, is a sad disappointment, since he uses it to twist, grimace, mug, indeed do the equivalent of eight or nine narcissistically dazzling auditions for eight or nine exotic grotesques. Where's the slowly gathering horror of that most sombre of tales? Not there. Not, it seems, anywhere this year. □

## MUSIC

# Clap trap

Andrew Clements

**Hell's Angels**
*Royal Court*

THE LAUNCH of Opera Factory London Sinfonietta in 1984 was widely hailed as a Good Thing. It brought together two organisations with lively commitment to contemporary music theatre and promised a fresh approach to staging opera, without the programming constraints of the major opera houses. *Hell's Angels*, with music by Nigel Osborne and text by David Freeman, is the group's first commission and it shares the Royal Court with OFLS's earlier staging of Cavalli's *La Calisto* until 25 January.

Good as it is to see any new opera in London, I'm afraid I cannot work up much enthusiasm for this particular offering. Freeman and Osborne's starting point for the libretto was the late 19th-century play *The Council of Love* by Oskar Pannizza, set in 1494. God looks down upon the Papal Court of the Borgias, sees the depravity and corruption that surrounds it, summons a Council of Love in Heaven and combines causes with Satan to punish the world for its sins. Satan provides the answer; he invents syphilis.

Onto Pannizza's basic scenario Freeman has grafted a further contemporary layer. The problem now is a Pope who is too honest and humane — he is in favour of birth control, he wishes to clean out the dirty corners of the Vatican's financial dealings and he ends up poisoned by his advisers. God is mortified and convenes a second Council of Love to discuss what to do. This time Satan comes up with AIDS.

So the subject is fundamentally a serious one — 'the opera deals in myth and superstition rather than history or religion,' says a note in the programme. But it is all constructed in flippant, self-conscious bad taste, often on the level of a sex-romp — God is senile, Christ slow-witted, the Virgin Mary domineering, the Borgias spend all their time screwing and murdering.

The jokes are remorseless, even if only a fraction of them is genuinely funny. When the mood suddenly darkens for the last few scenes it is hard to make the adjustment and take the opera's message at face value.

Far worse stories have been saved by their music. But Osborne does not impose his personality upon the plot with sufficient force and is largely content to provide aural backdrops for the stage action. A few sections are beautifully imagined: a complex vocal ensemble for the introduction of the syphilitic woman to the Borgia court; an expressive cello solo for the present-day Pope's biggest monologue; a memorable, doom-ridden atmosphere for the final scene, when Satan sends his AIDS-ridden boy into the world. But generally the vocal lines have mundane lyrical shapes, the transitions between speech and song are awkward and the interludes in each act, to allow the singers rapid costume changes, are obvious vamp-till-ready padding. Osborne is too accomplished a composer, too professional a technician not to be able to manufacture plausible sound-worlds for the main themes, but they lack the imprint of conviction, the belief that the drama would be fatally incomplete without a musical layer.

Performances in the by now familiar Opera Factory mould are committed and, given the terms of reference of David Freeman's production, excellent. Since none of the characters save perhaps that of the modern Pope (credibly portayed by Nigel Robson) is fleshed out beyond caricature, the singers are reduced to quick-change impressions while coping efficiently with Osborne's generally idiomatic writing. Marie Angel, Helen Charnock and Janis Kelly are the three angels, later doubling as assorted Borgias; Tom McDonnell is the dissipated God, Nigel Robson the vacant Jesus. Omar Ebrahim is a sinister cherub, Richard Sewart a dyspeptic Satan. Altogether, though, it is not a memorable show and future OFLS commissions will need to be less sketchy, musically and dramatically.

Osborne, too, has another opera in the pipeline, a commission for Glyndeborne to a libretto by Craig Raine, and that is likely to give a far better idea of his true potential as a composer for the stage. □



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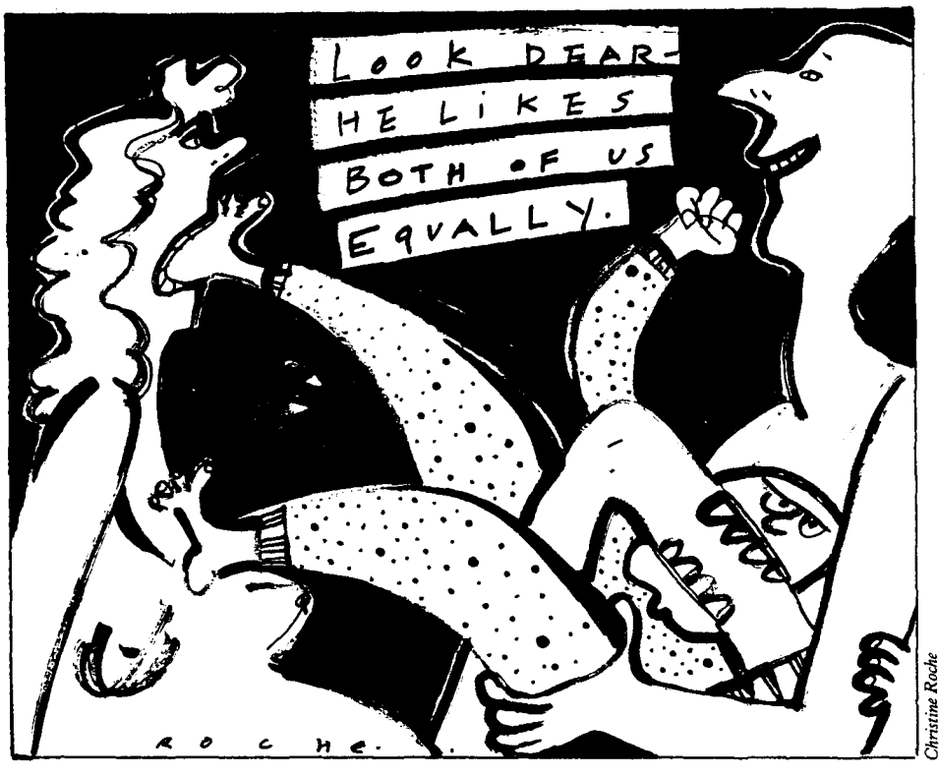


Christine Roche

# Going halves

## Christopher Meade

OUR SON JOE is nearly two now and his mother and I look after him for half the week each, except for Wednesday when he goes to a childminder. Every morning he wakes to bounce in his cot chanting, 'Hattidaddihattidaddi' (his mum's name is Hattie; unable to say 'c' or 's' yet, he pronounces my Christian name 'twit'). He can choose whom to run to when he bonks his head or wants his bottle, and divides his affections between us fifty-fifty without any outward signs of schizophrenia.

Shared childcare with both parents earning part-time must be, our friends insist, the ideal solution to the problems of non-sexist child rearing. You're both equally close to the child, both have lives apart — the hassles are halved and the pleasures doubled; the perfect balance. Well . . . yes. But it's not quite that simple.

All parents know that the conventional picture of snug couple confirmed in their union by cute, gurgling offspring is a sham. Babies burst into our lives like jealous lovers, shattering peace and symmetry. Without the breathing space of traditional divisions of domestic labour, resentments and frustrations surface frequently and need to be dealt with fast. In the early days each nappy change felt like a struggle for possession; when Joe howled as I fumbled at his crutch with ointment and pins I panicked that I'd never get the hang of it, that perhaps after all men were innately inferior at folding up terry towels. A few hours later, though, it was Hattie's turn to fumble cack-handed while I dished out advice from the warmth of bed.

The maths is complex too, subdividing nights, days and weeks to compute who does what when. Romantic daydreams evaporate and systems management takes over as routines become established.

During the pregnancy we spent more time negotiating terms in the event of a future breakdown in our relationship than we did getting gooey about the joys ahead. The experience of other childcare-sharing friends had left us wary. Joint responsibility can make breaking up harder; if neither parent wants more or less custody of the child they must stay in constant contact, living close by and meeting twice weekly to rub salt in old wounds. Thus, like true modern lovers, we hypothesised crises and considered options as I listened at Hattie's belly for sounds of kicking.

In the labour ward we sang 'Nick nack paddywack' for six hours solid — our personal version of psychoprophylaxis — and, after much work on Hattie's part, Joe came rolling home, purple, wrinkled and wonderful. For the first few months I felt as newborn as he, estranged fom the big, noisy world beyond our bedroom, fascinated by his every breath and bowel movement.

When we did venture forth again, Hattie became just another mum, but in the eyes of passers-by I was Superdad. Old women would gurgle and croon at the sleeping blob in a sling round my tummy. What a Good Man I was to be so involved! At first I basked in the glory, till I realised that all my hard work was being viewed as a chivalrous deed done as a treat for The Mum. I'm more shirty with flatterers now and snap back at comments which assume that She does the washing, is the one who really cares.

I admit that I've notched up Hattie's mistakes at times — her failure to stock up on Ribena, the night she slept through his crying when she was on duty — storing these as evidence to counterbalance my own fears of inadequacy. I admit to a twinge of elation when Joe calls out my name alone in the night and I go to him martyrish but chuffed all the same.

And I'm aware that responsibility is a tricky substance to divide. The woman can worry overtime at the office about baby's snuffly nose or the man drift into seeing childcare as a pause between the real business of breadwinning — or jobhunting. I don't think that's happened to us (and Hattie agrees), but it could.

Right now the system works. Joe can base his sense of security on more than one frail relationship and can model himself on whichever bits of either of us he pleases. We love him and each other still and regularly escape the home for long enough to return recharged and keen. We have our cake and eat it too, which seems perfectly sensible; why have children you either seldom see or get such a surfeit of that you're sick of the sight of them?

What I most enjoy about life with Joe is the new range of emotion which has invaded the everyday — hoots of laughter, howls of outrage. No chance of hiding behind cool, male defences in the face of this sensual overload of hugs, games and kisses.

But, whereas a 'Working Mother' is a recognised entity, the equivalent male role feels less substantial; sometimes rich diversity begins to look like a jumble of inadequacies: semi-parent, meagre crust-earner, part-time dilettante.

Fortunately, Joe wriggles into our bed each morning, hot, damp and giggling, and jumps on my head in his effort to reshape it to adapt to his presence. □

# Weekend competition

**No 2906** **Set by Margaret Rogers**

As Parliament prepares to decide the fate of the British Sunday, could you help it to make up its mind with either a lament for the old-style Sunday or an ode to the proposed new version? Max. 12 lines by 23 January.

**No 2903** **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Scenes from popular TV shows readjusted for very young viewers.

**Report** **By Babe Bio**

Still suffring from Crissmass-stroke-Hogmannie alkerhol poisoning, are you? Perhaps you shood stick to the glue (joak, joak). In any case, whot we arsked you for wasnt the programs re-ritten as *stories*, but *seens* — you know, with caricters torking and karmmrer angles and stuff. Pore yourselves some strong black coffie, Pickles, Kearney and co. Twelve quid apeece ( but think yourselves lucky) for the tottering entries below.

*Hill Street Blues*

*Int. night. Capt. Furillo and Joyce Davenport in Furillo's apartment*

**Joyce:** Did you have a busy day, Frank?



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**Frank:** Gosh, I certainly did. What with the Road Safety exhibition and visiting schools and the temperance meeting, I had no time to go to Mass this morning . . .
**Joyce:** I'm sure Jesus will forgive you.
**Frank:** I know he would, Joyce, but he won't have to. I popped in on my way home. Then Neil hurt his wrist helping old ladies across the street and Belker . . .
**Joyce:** Belker didn't bite anyone, did he?
**Frank:** No. He understands now that you have to be kind and patient with the unfortunate. Boy, he looked so smart in his new suit. He's saved really hard for that.
**Joyce:** I think there's a lesson for us all there.
**Frank:** You're right. Goodnight, Joyce. Thanks for calling in with the chicken soup.
**Joyce:** Goodnight, Frank. God bless you.
*She leaves*

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

*Minder*
**Arthur:** Look, Terence! Look what's fallen off the back of that bright red lorry. Lots of lovely teddies!
**Terry:** Yes, but they're not ours. Let's go and polish some cars.
**Arthur:** Wait, Terry. Finders keepers — even you must know that funny old expression.
*Later*
**Terry:** You're so silly, Arthur! Sometimes I wonder why I'm friends with you! These are horrible foreign teddies — when you play with them nasty spikes stick out. I think that lorry driver meant to drop them. They're no good!
**Arthur:** Don't be cross, Terry! I've had a jolly good look at these teddies. Look, stuffed inside are lots of bags of funny white powder. I know a man who likes to buy powder like that. Come on . . . .

PETER NORMAN

*Dynasty*
**Narrator:** It's morning at the Carrington Mansion. Hello, says Mr Sun. Everyone is getting up. First comes Oilman Blake.
**Soppy voice** (*sings*)**:** Oilman Blake, Oilman Blake,
Everyone wants a slice of his cake.
**Narrator:** And who are these coming down together?
**Soppy Voice:** Luke'n'Steve, Luke'n'Steve,
Oilman Blake is starting to heave.
**Narrator:** And now here's Alexis. Alexis is a mummy. Does your mummy look like that? But Alexis is a funny mummy: she keeps losing her children, but she always finds them.
**Soppy voice:** Naughty Alexis, naughty Alexis,
Nobody's mummy is as naughty as Dex's.
**Narrator:** Have you noticed? That's right, everybody's got mixed up in the night and they're all coming out of the wrong rooms. Here comes Krystle: can you see whose room she came from?

NOEL PETTY

*Hill Street Blues*
**Narrator:** Andy and Bobby are driving along the street. They are good friends and always try to help each other, but sometimes they quarrel. Listen, they're quarrelling now.
**Andy:** I say we should stop now.
**Bobby:** And I say we should wait.
**Andy:** But I'm hungry.
**Bobby:** You're always hungry. All right, we'll stop for doughnuts.
**Narrator:** Here's the baker's, but something's going on.
**Bobby:** There's a robber; he's after the jam tarts.
**Andy:** Oh, what a knave! We must catch him.
**Robber:** Stick up your hands.
**Andy:** *You* stick them up! Quickly Bobby, stick his hands together with the tarts.
**Robber:** Ow! I'm stuck.
**Narrator:** Well done Andy and Bobby, you've got each other out of a jam again!

KATIE MALLETT

## TELEVISION

# Hugo Williams
# Class of '57

FOR THOSE WHO could see, New Year's Day delivered a batch of watchable programmes on Larry Parnes, Philip Larkin, Carl Perkins, Brigitte Bardot, Charlie Chaplin, even Hazel O'Connor and her brush with the Hare Krishnas: a winning film called **Persuaders** (C4), unfairly scheduled for after midnight when *no* one was around. It was an entertaining night.

**Mr Parnes Shillings and Pence** (C4) was about the East End rag-trade boy who single-handedly launched British rock 'n' roll from a telephone in Fifties Soho. It was a brief period, '56-'58, comparable to the Punk skyrocket exactly 20 years later and superseded, as then, by the most awful teen-slop as the industry learnt from America how best to exploit the awkward new product in the persons of such as Craig Douglas, the singing milkman from the Isle of Wight. While it lasted, it was a colourful period, and may yet achieve respectability, which would be a pity.

Parnes, who taught most of his boys how to knot their ties, had the idea of incorporating a sales-pitch into his singers' surnames, like Daz soap powder. Tommy Hicks, a part-time acoustic country singer at the '2 i' s', became Tommy Steele when he switched to electric and stardom: 'I used to have me tea at home in Bermondsey, put on something casual and take me guitar on the bus over to Soho . . . We used to OD on coffee in those days.' Parnes's other rocking adjectives and abstract nouns included Marty Wilde, Johnny Gentle, Billy Fury, Duffy Power, Vince Eager and Dickie Pride.

Joe Brown, one of the few genuinely talented guitarists of the Stable, was less than ecstatic in his memoirs of Mr Parnes's petty-cash-flow. Brown was on *Oh Boy!* every week and still taking a bus to the studio. His description of insane zig-zag tours up and down the country in trains was effectively inter-cut with Parnes's earnest claims of research, maps, flags and population counts. One 9s. taxi claim had a 1s. tip against it. 'What's this?' said Larry, '3d. is quite sufficient.'

Asked who was the most talented of the bunch, Wilde and Brown didn't hesitate: 'Dickie Pride, the Sheik of Shake. He was crazy — a complete hair-brain. You ask any of the boys and they'll all say Dickie Pride. He used to get back at the audience. A bit of aggro from the Teds and he'd be off the stage, nutting them.'

A surviving clip of Pride in action bears them out. Here was a man who clearly understood the new medium. His tight-knit performance was very different from Tommy Steele's winsome, amateurish covers of Guy Mitchell hits. I wonder, might Pride yet challenge Johnny Kidd, also dead, as the true guv'nor of pre-Beatles British beat?

A good ole boys reunion of a more Establishment variety was **Blue Suede Shoes** (C4), whose author, Carl Perkins, had the doubtful good fortune of having his classic anthem knocked into a cocked hat at birth by his friend and stable mate Elvis Presley — though that fact is rarely acknowledged, least of all here among his British friends and fans, George Harrison, Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton and Dave Edmunds. At one point in this relaxed supergig there appeared to be six guitars on stage, all going. 'Do my class graduate or do they graduate?' cried old Blue Suede Shoes to a wholly affirmative crowd.

France has never contributed a note to rock 'n' roll music — Johnny Halliday is a star of *variété*, not rock — but Brigitte Bardot was the period's No 1 female icon, to use a polite word. To be 15 in 1957, as readers of the *NS* will know, was to shiver equally, but differently, to BB and the Pelvis, though you had to be with an understanding adult to get into *Et Dieu Crea La Femme*.

According to **Brigitte Bardot — My Own Story** (C4) Bardot came from a typical French home. Aged seven, she was given 50 strokes for breaking a vase. (Her sister, three-and-a-half, got only 25.) 'As a punishment' they had to call their parents 'vous' from then on, as they were no longer to be considered as their children. This startling piece of social history seems to have had a formative effect on the sex kitten, who now went to war with her father with everything she had. M Bardot responded with everything *he* had. 'Lay one finger on my daughter,' he told the handsome Vadim, showing him a revolver, 'and I'll use it.' Given her background, it is easy to see why Bardot identifies with endangered or abandoned animals rather than as a film star. To this day she insists that she still thinks she is ugly.

'Sexual intercourse began/In nineteen sixty-three/(Which was rather late for me)/Between the end of the *Chatterley* ban/And the Beatles first LP.' **Philip Larkin** (BBC2) was mostly the moody *Monitor* portrait from 1964 with Betjeman nudging him round his gloomy Hull haunts: Humberside, canal side, graveside, Library ('No Stiletto Heels' printed on a door as we hear: 'How separate and unearthly love is/Or woman are, or what they do,/ Or in our young unreal wishes/Seem to be: synthetic, new,/And natureless in ecstasies.'). How fascinating, historically, his detached but touching *Church Going* is going to be one day. And even his choice of town: 'I thought that American visitors would take one look at the train timetable, see how difficult connections to Hull were and decide to go to Newcastle and interview Basil Bunting.'

The best contemporary comment came from Douglas Dunn, who acknowledges a debt but has doubts about Larkin's angry-white-man side: 'The longer I knew him the bigger the small 'c' of conservative became.' This was the Larkin, Dunn thought, who is most often and easily imitated. 'The other, inimitable Larkin — thick, wonderful phrasing and lyricism, not many people can do that, you have to have talent to do that, just isn't up for grabs.' It was feelingly and generously spoken. □

*Work in progress will be back next week*



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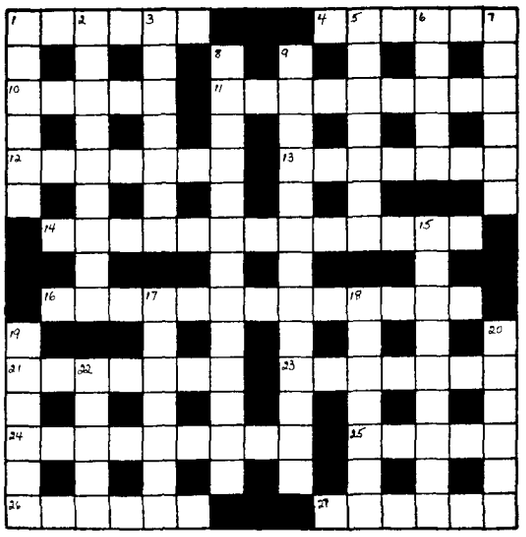

Name_____

Address_____

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ACROSS

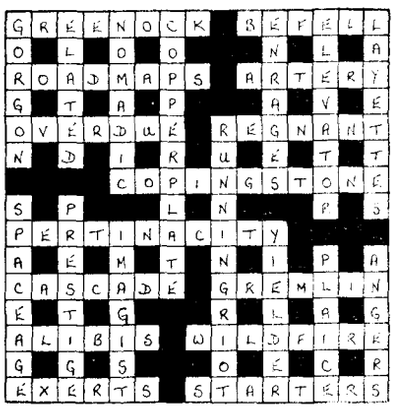
1. Managing successfully with something sharp in the tooth (6)
4. Tried nothing unusual as a journalist (6)
10. Something watery man discovered in his drink (5)
11. Make the wild mule not carry me for money (9)
12. There is nothing in a funny person or eccentric don (7)
13. Medium director (7)
14. Make Belinda invent protection from the sun (8, 5)
16. Soldier who carries a weapon on his person? (13)
21. Restore through a miracle in conversion (7)
23. Start trying to strike a woman there (7)
24. A boat can exist without a river (9)
25. Gave vent to anger in time (5)
26. Track partisanship? (6)
27. Cannot do without girls (6)

DOWN

1. Comforting gesture appears a second after worries (6)
2. Sensible things make the reverse of a bloomer after a little philosophy (9)
3. Representative discovers no place for gold in the orient (7)
5. Daily would become a receptacle if it lost face (7)
6. It is for other people to start turning on a successor (5)
7. Plaything for conductor (6)
8. Although right in the brain the disorderly American is not tried in public (5, 2, 6)
9. Giving attention to study the valuation of foreign currency (13)
15. They look after animals but cause heartbreak among donkeys (9)
17. Two people who have one publisher (7)
18. Paperwork addressed to European city or English road (7)
19. Supports pairs (6)
20. Second-class journeys for married women (6)
22. Referred to in an explicit editorial comment (5)

SETSQUARE

**Solution to 1503**



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# A CHALLENGE IN THE INNER CITY HACKNEY INNER CITY PARTNERSHIP

Hackney has often been labelled as the poorest Borough in the country. There is no doubt that the area has suffered from years of disinvestment and of insensitive policies by both public and private sector agencies.
The Borough, however, is full of life and fighting spirit, and it is gradually coming to terms with the tremendous social changes that it has gone through and the devastating impact of the economic recession. Two of its most important features are its exceptionally lively and highly developed community sector especially from within its black and minority ethnic communities, and the Council's total commitment to equal opportunities and genuine community involvement.
The Hackney Inner City Partnership has been a major contributor to both these developments and it is at the forefront of a major effort to secure more resources from, and greater recognition of its needs by, both the Public and the Private sectors and to improve the responsiveness to local needs and aspiration by service delivery agencies.
The following two vacancies exist within its 8 person "Partnership and Co-ordination" Unit:

## Partnership Liaison Officer

**Grade PO2 £13,761 – £14,910**

You will be assisting the head of the unit by servicing the various intercorporate committees and working parties of the Partnership, as well as promoting intercorporate liaison between various statutory agencies and Government Departments around issues and policies related to the aims of the Inner City Partnership.
You must have a good understanding of Local Authority and Public sector structures and operations and must have at last two years experience of working within a similar environment, ie liaising with various agencies and effecting changes in their operations. Experience in writing and presenting reports on complex policy issues, as well as in servicing committees, would be essential. Total commitment to, and understanding of, equal opportunities is required.
An understanding of Inner City life tensions and Community sector policies is essential for survival, as well as dedication, flexibility, hard work under pressure and ability to meet deadlines.
Attitudes and experience are more important than formal qualifications, though a degree in one of the Social Sciences would be desirable.
Job share applications will be welcomed with or without a partner.
Please quote Ref CK152/NSM.

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**Scale 5 £9,672 – £10,530**

To assist with the full range of office administration duties (eg maintaining office budget and personnel records, filing systems; stationery; arranging meetings, agendas and so on), as well as supporting other staff in the Unit, with data collection and storage work, maintenance of records, simple statistical analyses, etc.
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Job share applications will be welcomed with or without a partner.
Please quote Ref CK153/NSM.

Application forms are available from John Penney, Head of Personnel Services, Town Hall, Mare Street, E8 1EA or telephone 01-986 5331 (24 hour answering service) quoting reference.
Closing date: 21 January 1986.
The council intends to decentralise its services, therefore the duties, hours of work or location of these posts may be subject to change.

**HACKNEY COUNCIL**
**Working for local people**

We positively welcome applications from black people, disabled people and women where they are under-represented in particular jobs.



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# MEETINGS

**THEOSOPHY**: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Informal short talk & questions. 'Points of Agreement in All Religions' 8 p.m. 12 Jan. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2. N02.6

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON** (Gower St, WC1E 6BT).
Free Public Lectures, Spring Term 1986.
Thurs. 16 Jan. at 5.30, Neale Lecture in English History by Dr Kenneth O. Morgan, 'Fit for Heroes'?
British Post-War Reconstruction, 1918 and 1945', Gustave Tuck Theatre.
Fri. 17 Jan. at 5.30, Commonwealth Fund Lecture in American History by Professor John L. Thomas, 'The Road Not Taken: Perspectives on Post-Frontier America, 1920-1940', Gustave Tuck Theatre.
Mon. 24 Feb. at 5.30, Inaugural Lecture by Professor J.McN. Dodgson, 'Invention and Discovery in the Study of Early English Names', Chemistry Auditorium.
Tues. 18 Mar. at 5.30, Seton Memorial Lecture by Dr Jenny Wormald, 'Late-Medieval Scottish Kingship and its Legacy in Early-Modern Britain', Darwin Theatre.
Wed. 19 Mar. at 5.30, Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture in Northern Studies by Professor R.I. Page, 'A Most Vile People': Early English Historians on the Vikings', Gustave Tuck Theatre. N02.7

# BOOKS

**COLIN WILSON'S** 'Marx Refuted' appears in 'Lodestar' magazine, £1.20 post free from: Sanctuary Press, Nash House, Fishponds Road, London SW17. N02.8

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14 February

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**SHY, SENSITIVE**, lonely male, 26, warm, sincere, thoughtful and caring, likes travel, countryside, walking, inland waterways, industrial archaeology, arts, pubs seeks girl for companionship. Box (01)2125. N02.24

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**SPECIAL, ORDINARY**, vigorous, happy, sometimes serious, professional woman, 35, wants man who's spiritually, emotionally, intellectually alive, and fun. No husbands. London. Box (02)2131. N02.26

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# AGENDA

**FOR DETAILS CALL DAVID JONES 01-251 5487**

## THE SECRET RALLY

**To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Official Secrets Act 1911**

**Tuesday 14 January**

**SPEAKERS**

**Rt Hon Roy Hattersley MP; Rt Hon David Steel MP; Jonathan Aitken MP; Ralph Nader** (the legendary American Campaigner on secrecy and related issues); **Des Wilson** (Chairman of the Freedom of Information Campaign); **Peter Preston** (Editor, The Guardian); **Vincent Hanna** (Television Journalist); **Sarah Spencer** (General Secretary NCCL); **John Ward** (General Secretary First Division Association of Civil Servants); **Clive Ponting** (prosecuted under Section 2); **Sarah Tisdall** (prosecuted under Section 2); **Duncan Campbell** (prosecuted under Section 2).

**Stalls . . . Music . . . Entertainment**

**Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1**

**Doors open 6.30** **Rally begins 7.30**

**Tickets £3** — available on the door or in advance from OSA Birthday Rally, CFI, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD (send cheques/postal order and stamped addressed envelope). A campaigning and fund raising event for **The Campaign for Freedom of Information.**

## COAL AND COMMUNITY

**The Miner's Strike – One Year On**

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Two full days of organised discussion about the issues raised by the Strike with workshops on:

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*— Coalfield communities and industrial decline*

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*— The role of the media*

*— The state and industrial relations*

*— The law and policing issues.*

*— The labour movement and the strike*

For further details and an application form write to:

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**Division of Continuing Education,**
**University of Sheffield,**
**85 Wilkinson Street,**
**Sheffield S10 2GJ**
**or telephone: (0742) 78555 ext. 4920/1**

More Agenda on p.38



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# AGENDA

### TUES 14 JAN

**DEBT COUNSELLING:** session by JOHN ATTEWELL, demonstrating case study approach, 6-8pm, £2. (Westminster/Victoria). (BAC Counselling At Work). Ring Dinah Wheeler, 01-213 7521 for details/admission.

### WED 15 JAN

**FAITH IN THE CITY. A major lecture series on Wednesdays at St James's Church Piccadilly, 1.05pm consider the report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Areas.** This week, SIR RICHARD O'BRIEN, Chairman of the Commission, "People and Cities." Suggested donation £1.50/50p unwaged. Details 724 4511.

### THURS 23 JAN

**LONDON GREENPEACE GROUP** Public Meeting. A speaker from the **Campaign Against Police Repression** - to discuss the increasing clampdown on dissent, the new Public Order Bill and the growing opposition. Dick Sheppard House, 6 Endsleigh Street, London WC1. 8pm

### SAT 25 JAN

**NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST SOCIAL SECURITY CUTS - 'National Conference to Fight Fowler.'** Manchester University Students' Union, Oxford Road, Manchester. Speakers: Gordon Brown MP, others to be confirmed. Briefing on Social Security White Paper, Workshops, future strategy. Creche, wheelchair access, accommodation. Contact: Lucy Walker 01 379 6142.

### SAT 25 JAN

**CINEMA AND SOCIALISM DAY SCHOOL.** Speakers include Richard Dyer. 10am-5pm. Edward Herbert Building, Loughborough University. Details: **Tony Paley (0509) 230594.**

### MON 27 JAN

**CENTRAL LONDON LAG GROUP** will be meeting at 7.00pm, Red Lion Square, London WC1 to discuss CHILDREN - CARE AND RIGHTS. All welcome.


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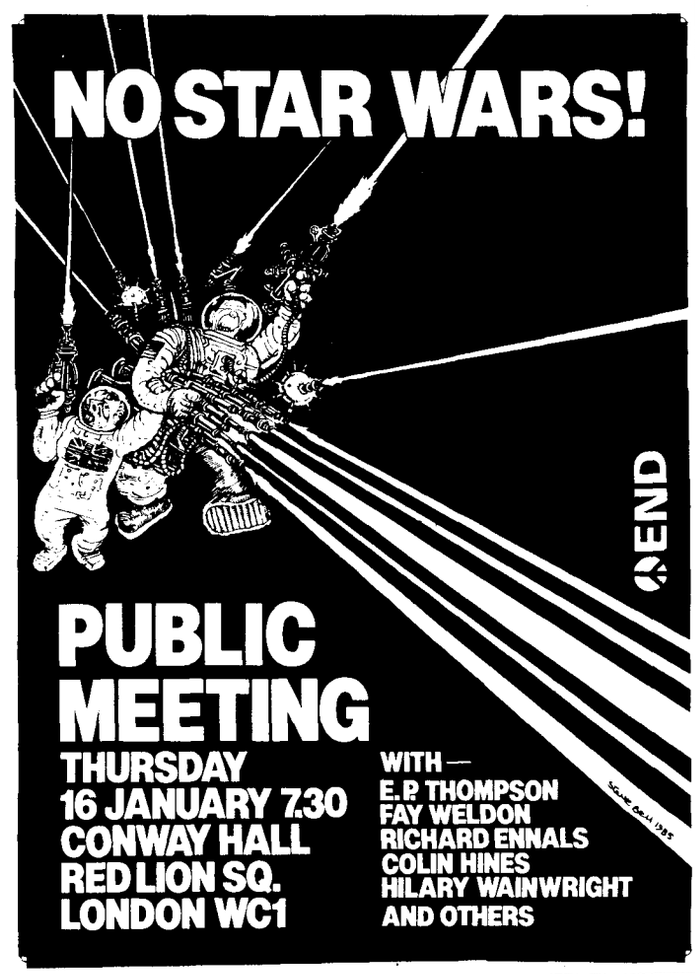





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MISANTHROPIC MUSINGS : SHOW OFF
NO NEED TO WRAP THEM
3 DOZEN DUREX, 40 TAMPONS - REGULAR AND DON'T PUT THEM IN A BAG HE SAYS
YET ANOTHER CASE OF THE OSTENTATIOUS, HIGH PROFILE, ANTI-SEXIST MALE

# CHESS

AT THE MOMENT the big question is whether London will land the Kasparov-Karpov return match, due to start in a month's time. There would seem to be four possibilities: that London will get the match, that Leningrad will get the match, that the match will be shared between London and Leningrad, or that it won't happen at all. I think the last is pretty unlikely. Although one would not expect Kasparov to be bursting with eagerness to put his crown at risk before it has had time to settle on his head, it would be amazing if he were to let Karpov regain the championship by default — the way he gained it from Fischer in the first place. Under protest, Gary will have to give Anatoly his chance for revenge.

Karpov has already indicated that he would prefer Leningrad as the venue. If anything, this might induce Campomanes, already under suspicion of undue favour towards his friend Tolya, to accept London's bid. I yet have a nasty feeling that the prospect of a world championship match in London is too good to come true, but there is little point in speculating, as the decision may well have been announced by the time you read this.

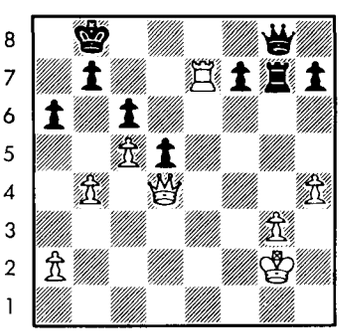
It is at least certain that the GLC, whose doom has been appropriately fixed for April Fools' Day, will bring a top quality tournament to London before its demise. The GLC International is to be held at the Great Eastern Hotel from 12 to 27 March and with prizes of £5,000 for the winner and £1,000 for the most brilliant game should prove a worthy successor to the Phillips & Drew Kings tournaments which crowded County Hall with chess fans in 1980, 1982 and 1984. As a reminder of the 1984 event, here is a game that displays some of the issues in King's Indian Defence theory:

**Miles-Nunn, London 1984. King's Indian, Sämisch Variation. 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 0-0 6. Be3 Nc6 7. Nge2 a6 8. Qd2 Rb8 9. h4 b5 10. h5 Nxh5?** Judging by the sequel, this is already fatal. 10 . . . e5 11. d5 Na5 seems more prudent. **11. Bh6 Bxh6 12. Qxh6 f5.** It is too late now for 12 . . . e5 in view of 13. g4 Nf6 14. Nd5. **13. exf5 Bxf5 14. g4 e5 15. gxf5 Rxf5 16. Ng3!** Without this tactic Black might well claim compensation for his piece. **Nxg3 17. Qxh7 + Kf8 18. Qh8 + Kf7 19. Rh7 + Rf7 20. Nd5 + Ke6 21. Bh3 + Nf5 22. Bxf5 + gxf5** Not 22 . . . Rxf5 23. Nxc7 + Qxc7 24. d5 mate. **23. Nxc7 + ! Ke7** He loses his Q after 23 . . . Qxc7 24. d5 + Ke7 25. Rxf7 + Kxf7 26. Qh7 + . **24. Rxf7 + Kxf7 25. Qh7 + Kf6. 0-0-0 Nxd4 27. Rhl 1-0.**

Very neatly done by Tony Miles, but Nunn never had a chance after his 10th move. It is because of its knife-edge character that the King's Indian occurs so infrequently in world championship matches. But is the Sämisch, with its rigid White pawn-structure, so much to be feared? One major divergence from this game for Black is to block White's advance with 9 . . . h5. But that is rather compromising. One would prefer a solution that yields speedy Q-side counterplay. To this end the anti-Sämisch antidote that I would recommend is **1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 0-0 6. Be3 e5 7. d5 c6 8. Bd3** (after 8. Qd2 cxd5 9. cxd5 Nbd7 Black gets counterplay in the c-file with . . . a6, b5 and . . . Nb6) **b5!** with lively play.

**Problem**

11 January is an anniversary that should be marked by some sort of tribute to one of the great players, arguably the greatest of them all. For it was on this day in 1941 that Emanuel Lasker died in a New York hospital. Here is the finish to one of his games. White to play and win.



**Solution**

**1. Qe5 + Ka7 2. b5!** (And certainly not 2. Re8? Rxg3 + when it is Black who wins.) **cxb5** (If 2 . . . axb5 3. Qc7 Qb8 4. Qa5 mate). **3. c6! fb 4. Qe3 + d4 5. Qxd4 + Kb8 6. Rxg7 and 1-0** in view of 6 . . . Qxg7 7. Qd8 + and 8. c7. From Lasker-Bauer, USA 1908.

**George Botterill**

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# QUIZ

(1) Which witness in the Thorpe trial was knighted in the New Year honours list?

(2) Which former Prime Minister, who was a political prisoner from 1972 to 1976, was knighed in the New Year honours list?

(3) Which language has Radio Moscow recently started using in some of its international broadcasts?

(4) Which country has just acquired its first television service?

(5) For which seat does Shirley Williams hope to become SDP candidate?

(6) What is to be the name of Eddie Shah's new paper?

(7) How many books does Barbara Cartland claim to have written last year?

(8) Who, according to official papers just released, took exception to the film *Beau Brummell* in 1954?

(9) Which singer who had a hit with *Hello Mary Lou* died last week?

(10) Which singer who had a hit with *Whiskey in the Jar* died last week?

**Answers**

(1) Jack Hayward; (2) Garfield Todd; (3) Afrikaans; (4) Nepal; (5) Cambridge; (6) *Today*; (7) 26; (8) The Queen; (9) Rick Nelson; (10) Phil Lynott



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